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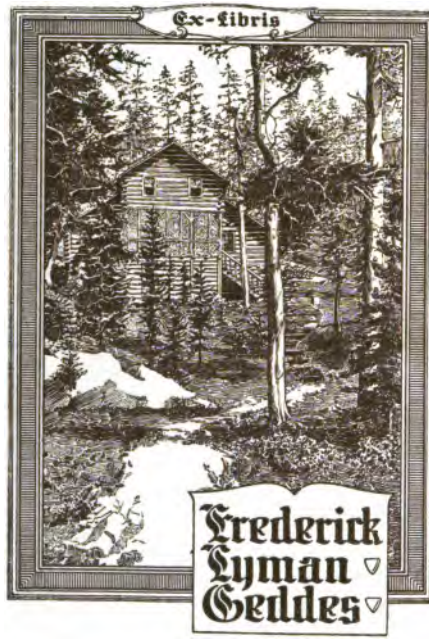
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British Theatre

THE GAMESTER.

A

TRAGEDY,

By Mr. EDWARD MOORE.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

V. 2

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of

JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

MDCCXCII.

Eliot
Eddes Family
4-30-32

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY PELHAM.

SIR,

IT was a very fine piece of oratory of a young lawyer at the bar, who, as counsel against a highwayman, observed that the prosecutor had been robbed of a certain quantity of ore, which being purified by fire, cut into circular pieces, and impressed with the image of a king and the arms of a state, brought with it the necessaries, the conveniences, and the luxuries of life. I'll be hanged, says an honest country gentleman who was standing by, if this flourishing fool does not mean money. But if he had said it in one word, would not all the rest have been implied?

Just such a censure as this should I deserve, if, in an address to Mr. Pelham, I endeavoured to enumerate the qualities he possesses. The characters of great men are generally connected with their names; and it is impossible for any one to read the name of Mr. Pelham, without connecting with it, in his own mind, the virtues of humanity.

It is therefore sufficient that I desire his acceptance of this Play; that I acknowledge the obligations I owe him, and that I subscribe myself

His most grateful,

And most obedient servant,

EDW. MOORE.

THE GAMESTER.

If there be one vice more pernicious than all the rest of the black catalogue which debases humanity, it is that of GAMING.—To that pernicious passion this Play is a noble antidote.—The present age is unhappily more distinguished by this than any other pursuit; it infects those most who are to lead in fashion, and subverts every generous quality of our nature in its progress.

He, whose ill-luck and deficiency of resource reduce him to the necessity of trick and deception, when detected, is expelled the company of *honourable* Gamblers, and reduced to gull inferior credulity with the manners of the fashionable, and the artifices of a villain.—By degrees, society is armed against this degraded plunderer—shut out from the haunts which admit *every* description of RUFFIAN but his *own*, he is driven to unlicensed depredations upon the highway, and in regular progression of association from the Peer down to the pickpocket, the *gibbet* but finishes what the *hazard-table* began.

If MOORE, the Author of the present affecting Tragedy, had done nothing else for mankind, he deserves to rank among the best benefactors to Society of the Republic of Letters.

PROLOGUE.

Written and Spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

LIKE fam'd La Mancha's knight, who, lance in hand,
Mounted his steed to free th' enchanted land,
Our Quixote bard sets out a monster taming,
Arm'd at all points, to fight that hydra—Gaming.
Aloft on Pegasus he waves his pen,
And hurls defiance at the caitiff's den:
The first on fancy'd giants spent his rage,
But this has more than windmills to engage.
He combats passion, rooted in the soul,
Whose powers at once delight ye and controul;
Whose magic bondage each lost slave enjoys,
Nor wishes freedom, though the spell destroys.
To save our land from this magician's charms,
And rescue maids and matrons from his arms,
Our knight poetic comes—And, Oh, ye fair!
This black Enchanter's wicked arts beware!
His subtle poison dims the brightest eyes,
And, at his touch, each grace and beauty dies.
Love, gentleness, and joy, to rage give way,
And the soft dove becomes a bird of prey.
May this our bold advent'rer break the spell,
And drive the dæmon to his native hell.

Ye slaves of passion, and ye dupes of chance,
Wake all your pow'rs from this destructive trance!
Shake off the shackles of this tyrant vice:
Hear other calls than those of cards and dice:
Be learn'd in nobler arts than arts of play,
And other debts than those of honour pay.
No longer live insensible to shame,
Lost to your country, families, and fame.
Could our romantic muse this work achieve,
Would there one honest heart in Britain grieve?
Th' attempt, though wild, would not in vain be made,
If ev'ry honest hand would lend its aid.

Dramatis Personæ.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

BEVERLEY,	Mr. Kemble.
LEWSON,	Mr. Bensley.
STUKELY,	Mr. Palmer.
JARVIS,	Mr. Aickin.
BATES,	Mr. Packer.
DAWSON,	Mr. Phillimore.
Waiter,	Mr. Lyons.

Women.

Mrs. BEVERLEY,	Mrs. Siddons.
CHARLOTTE,	Mrs. Kemble.
LUCY,	Mrs. Heard.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

BEVERLEY,	Mr. Pope.
LEWSON,	Mr. Farren.
STUKELY,	Mr. Aickin.
JARVIS,	Mr. Hull.
BATES,	Mr. Fearon.
DAWSON,	Mr. Thompson.
Waiter,	Mr. Ledger.

Women.

Mrs. BEVERLEY,	Mrs. Pope.
CHARLOTTE,	Mrs. Wells.
LUCY,	Mrs. Platt.

THE GAMESTER.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Beverley.

BE comforted, my dear; all may be well yet. And now, methinks, the lodging begins to look with another face. Oh, sister! sister! if these were all my hardships; if all I had to complain of were no more than quitting my house, servants, equipage, and shew, your pity would be weakness.

Char. Is poverty nothing then?

Mrs. Bev. Nothing in the world, if it affected only me. While we had a fortune, I was the happiest of the rich: and now 'tis gone, give me but a bare subsistence and my husband's smiles, and I'll be the happiest of the poor. To me now, these lodgings want nothing but their master. Why do you look at me?

Char. That I may hate my brother.

Mrs. Bev. Don't talk so, Charlotte.

Char. Has he not undone you?——Oh, this pernicious vice of gaming! But, methinks his usual hours

of four or five in the morning might have contented him; 'twas misery enough to wake for him till then. Need he have staid out all night?——I shall learn to detest him.

Mrs. Bev. Not for the first fault. He never slept from me before.

Char. Slept from you! No, no, his nights have nothing to do with sleep. How has this one vice driven him from every virtue!——Nay, from his affections, too!——The time was, sister———

Mrs. Bev. And is. I have no fear of his affections. Would I knew that he were safe!

Char. From ruin and his companions.—But that's impossible. His poor little boy, too! What must become of him?

Mrs. Bev. Why, want shall teach him industry. From his father's mistakes he shall learn prudence, and from his mother's resignation, patience. Poverty has no such terrors in it as you imagine. There's no condition of life, sickness and pain excepted, where happiness is excluded. The husbandman, who rises early to his labour, enjoys more welcome rest at night for't. His bread is sweeter to him; his home happier; his family dearer; his enjoyments surer. The sun that rouses him in the morning, set's in the evening to release him. All situations have their comforts, if sweet contentment dwell in the heart. But my poor Beverley has none. The thought of having ruined those he loves, is misery for ever to him. Would I could ease his mind of that!

Char. If he alone were ruined, 'twere just he should be punished. He is my brother, 'tis true; but when I think of what he has done; of the fortune you brought him; of his own large estate too, squandered away upon this vilest of passions, and among the vilest of wretches! Oh, I have no patience! My own little fortune is untouched, he says. Would I were sure on't.

Mrs. Bev. And so you may——'twould be a sin to doubt it.

Char. I will be sure on't——'twas madness in me to give it to his management. But I'll demand it from him this morning. I have a melancholy occasion for it.

Mrs. Bev. What occasion?

Char. To support a sister.

Mrs. Bev. No; I have no need on't. Take it, and reward a lover with it.——The generous Lewson deserves much more.——Why won't you make him happy?

Char. Because my sister's miserable.

Mrs. Bev. You must not think so. I have my jewels left yet. I'll sell them to supply our wants; and when all's gone, these hands shall toil for our support. The poor should be industrious—Why those tears, Charlotte?

Char. They flow in pity for you.

Mrs. Bev. All may be well yet. When he has nothing to lose I shall fetter him in these arms again; and then what is it to be poor?

Char. Cure him but of this destructive passion, and my uncle's death may retrieve all yet.

Mrs. Bev. Ay, Charlotte, could we cure him. But the disease of play admits no cure but poverty; and the loss of another fortune would but increase his shame and his affliction. Will Mr. Lewson call this morning?

Char. He said so last night. He gave me hints too, that he had suspicions of our friend Stukely.

Mrs. Bev. Not of treachery to my husband? That he loves play, I know, but surely he's honest.

Char. He would fain be thought so; therefore I doubt him. Honesty needs no pains to set itself off.

Enter LUCY.

Mrs. Bev. What now, Lucy?

Lucy. Your old steward, madam. I had not the heart to deny him admittance, the good old man begged so hard for't. [*Exit* Lucy.

Enter JARVIS.

Mrs. Bev. Is this well, Jarvis? I desired you to avoid me.

Jar. Did you, madam? I am an old man, and had forgot. Perhaps, too, you forbad my tears; but I am old, madam, and age will be forgetful.

Mrs. Bev. The faithful creature! how he moves me. [*To* Char.

Char. Not to have seen him had been cruelty.

Jar. I have forgot these apartments too. I remem-

ber none such in my young master's house; and yet I have lived in't these five and twenty years. His good father would not have dismissed me.

Mrs. Bev. He had no reason, Jarvis.

Jar. I was faithful to him while he lived, and when he died, he bequeathed me to his son. I have been faithful to him, too.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, I know it, Jarvis.

Char. We both know it.

Jar. I am an old man, madam, and have not a long time to live. I asked but to have died with him, and he dismissed me.

Mrs. Bev. Pr'ythee no more of this! 'Twas his poverty that dismissed you.

Jar. Is he indeed so poor, then?—Oh! he was the joy of my old heart——But must his creditors have all?—And have they sold his house too? His father built it when he was but a prating boy. The times that I have carried him in these arms! And, Jarvis, says he, when a beggar has asked charity of me, why should people be poor? You shan't be poor, Jarvis; if I were a king, nobody should be poor. Yet he is poor. And then he was so brave!——Oh, he was a brave little boy! And yet so merciful, he'd not have killed the gnat that stung him.

Mrs. Bev. Speak to him, Charlotte; for I cannot.

"*Char.* When I have wiped my eyes."

Jar. I have a little money, madam; it might have been more, but I have loved the poor. All that I have is yours.

Mrs. Bev. No, Jarvis; we have enough yet. I thank you, though, and will deserve your goodness.

Jar. But shall I see my master? And will he let me attend him in his distresses? I'll be no expence to him; and 'twill kill me to be refused. Where is he, madam?

Mrs. Bev. Not at home, Jarvis. You shall see him another time.

Char. To-morrow, or the next day—Oh, Jarvis! what a change is here?

Jar. A change indeed, madam! my old heart aches at it. And yet, methinks—But here's somebody coming.

Enter LUCY *with* STUKELY.

Lucy. Mr. Stukely, madam. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Good morning to you, ladies. Mr. Jarvis, your servant. Where's my friend, madam? [*To Mrs.* Bev.

Mrs. Bev. I should have asked that question of you. Have you seen him to-day?

Stuke. No, madam.

Char. Nor last night?

Stuke. Last night! Did he not come home, then?

Mrs. Bev. No. Were you not together?

Stuke. At the beginning of the evening; but not since. Where can he have staid?

Char. You call yourself his friend, sir; why do you encourage him in this madness of gaming?

Stuke. You have asked me that question before,

madam; and I told you my concern was that I could not save him; Mr. Beverley is a man, madam; and if the most friendly entreaties have no effect upon him, I have no other means. My purse has been his, even to the injury of my fortune. If that has been encouragement, I deserve censure; but I meant it to retrieve him.

Mrs. Bev. I don't doubt it, sir; and I thank you—But where did you leave him last night?

Stuke. At Wilson's, madam, if I ought to tell; in company I did not like. Possibly he may be there still. Mr. Jarvis knows the house, I believe.

Jar. Shall I go, madam?

Mrs. Bev. No, he may take it ill.

Char. He may go as from himself.

Stuke. And, if he pleases, madam, without naming me. I am faulty myself, and should conceal the errors of a friend. But I can refuse nothing here.

[*Bowing to the ladies.*

Jar. I would fain see him, methinks.

Mrs. Bev. Do so, then; but take care how you upbraid him—I have never upbraided him.

Jar. Would I could bring him comfort! [*Exit.*

Stuke. Don't be too much alarmed, madam. All men have their errors, and their times of seeing them. Perhaps my friend's time is not come yet. But he has an uncle; and old men don't live for ever. You should look forward, madam; we are taught how to value a second fortune by the loss of a first.

[*Knocking at the door.*

Mrs. Bev. Hark!——No—— that knocking was too rude for Mr. Beverley. Pray heaven he be well!

Stuke. Never doubt it, madam. You shall be well, too—Every thing shall be well. [*Knocking again.*

Mrs. Bev. The knocking is a little loud, though—Who waits there? Will none of you answer?—None of you, did I say?—Alas, what was I thinking of! I had forgot myself.

Char. I'll go, sister——But don't be alarmed so. [*Exit.*

Stuke. What extraordinary accident have you to fear, madam?

Mrs. Bev. I beg your pardon; but 'tis ever thus with me in Mr. Beverley's absence. No one knocks at the door, but I fancy it is a messenger of ill news.

Stuke. You are too fearful, madam; 'twas but one night of absence; and if ill thoughts intrude (as love is always doubtful), think of your worth and beauty, and drive them from your breast.

Mrs. Bev. What thoughts? I have no thoughts that wrong my husband.

Stuke. Such thoughts indeed would wrong him. The world is full of slander; and every wretch that knows himself unjust, charges his neighbour with like passions; and by the general frailty hides his own——If you are wise, and would be happy, turn a deaf ear to such reports. 'Tis ruin to believe them.

Mrs. Bev. Ay, worse than ruin. 'Twould be to sin against conviction. Why was it mentioned?

Stuke. To guard you against rumour. The sport of

half mankind is mischief; and for a single error they make men devils. If their tales reach you, disbelieve them.

Mrs. Bev. What tales? By whom? Why told? I have heard nothing—or if I had, with all his errors, my Beverley's firm faith admits no doubt—It is my safety, my seat of rest and joy, while the storm threatens round me. I'll not forsake it. [Stukely *sighs and looks down.*] Why turn you, sir, away? and, why that sigh?

Stuke. I was attentive, madam; and sighs will come we know not why. Perhaps I have been too busy—If it should seem so, impute my zeal to friendship, that meant to guard you against evil tongues. Your Beverley is wronged, slandered most vilely—My life upon his truth.

Mrs. Bev. And mine too. Who is't that doubts it? But no matter——I am prepared, sir——Yet why this caution?——You are my husband's friend; I think you mine too; the common friend of both. [*Pauses.*] I had been unconcerned else.

Stuke. For Heaven's sake, madam, be so still! I meant to guard you against suspicion, not to alarm it.

Mrs. Bev. Nor have you, sir. Who told you of suspicion? I have a heart it cannot reach.

Stuke. Then I am happy—I would say more—but am prevented.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. Who was it, Charlotte?

Char. What a heart has that Jarvis!—A creditor, sister. But the good old man has taken him away—Don't distress his wife; don't distress his sister, I could hear him say. 'Tis cruel to distress the afflicted——And when he saw me at the door, he begged pardon that his friend had knocked so loud.

Stuke. I wish I had known of this. Was it a large demand, madam?

Char. I heard not that; but visits, such as these, we must expect often—Why so distress'd, sister? This is no new affliction.

Mrs. Bev. No, Charlotte; but I am faint with watching—quite sunk and spiritless—Will you excuse me, sir? I'll to my chamber, and try to rest a little.

Stuke. Good thoughts go with you, madam. My bait is taken then, [*Aside.*]—Poor Mrs. Beverley! How my heart grieves to see her thus!

Char. Cure her, and be a friend then.

Stuke. How cure her, madam?

Char. Reclaim my brother.

Stuke. Ay, give him a new creation, or breathe another soul into him. I'll think on't, madam. Advice, I see, is thankless.

Char. Useless I am sure it is, if thro' mistaken friendship, or other motives, you feed his passion with your purse, and sooth it by example. Physicians, to cure fevers, keep from the patient's thirsty lip the cup that would inflame him. You give it to his hands. [*A knocking.*] Hark, sir!——These are

my brother's desperate symptoms——Another creditor.

Stuke. One not so easily got rid of—What, Lewson!

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. Madam, your servant——Yours, sir. I was enquiring for you at your lodgings.

Stuke. This morning! You had business, then?

Lew. You'll call it by another name, perhaps. Where's Mr. Beverley, madam?

Char. We have sent to enquire for him.

Lew. Is he abroad then? He did not use to go out so early.

Char. No, nor stay out so late.

Lew. Is that the case? I am sorry for it. But Mr. Stukely, perhaps, may direct you to him.

Stuke. I have already, sir. But what was your business with me?

Lew. To congratulate you upon your late successes at play. Poor Beverley!——But you are his friend; and there's a comfort in having successful friends.

Stuke. And what am I to understand by this?

Lew. That Beverley's a poor man, with a rich friend; that's all.

Stuke. Your words would mean something, I suppose. Another time, sir, I shall desire an explanation.

Lew. And why not now? I am no dealer in long sentences. A minute or two will do for me.

Stuke. But not for me, sir. I am slow of apprehension, and must have time and privacy. A lady's

presence engages my attention. Another morning I may be found at home.

Lew. Another morning, then, I'll wait upon you.

Stuke. I shall expect you, sir. Madam, your servant. [*Exit* Stukely.

Char. What mean you by this?

Lew. To hint to him that I know him.

Char. How know him? Mere doubt and supposition!

Lew. I shall have proof soon.

Char. And what then? Would you risque your life to be his punisher?

Lew. My life, madam! Don't be afraid. And yet I am happy in your concern for me. But let it content you that I know this Stukely——'Twould be as easy to make him honest as brave.

Char. And what do you intend to do?

Lew. Nothing, till I have proof. Yet my suspicions are well-grounded—But, methinks, madam, I am acting here without authority. Could I have leave to call Mr. Beverley brother, his concerns would be my own. Why will you make my services appear officious?

Char. You know my reasons, and should not press me. But I am cold, you say; and cold I will be, while a poor sister's destitute——My heart bleeds for her; and till I see her sorrows moderated, love has no joys for me.

Lew. Can I be less a friend by being a brother? I would not say an unkind thing—But the pillar of

your house is shaken; prop it with another, and it shall stand firm again. You must comply.

Char. And will, when I have peace within myself. But let us change this subject—Your business here this morning is with my sister. Misfortunes press too hard upon her; yet, till to-day, she has borne them nobly.

Lew. Where is she?

Char. Gone to her chamber. Her spirits failed her.

Lew. I hear her coming. Let what has passed with Stukely be a secret—She has already too much to trouble her.

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY.

Mrs. Bev. Good morning, sir; I heard your voice, and, as I thought, enquiring for me. Where's Mr. Stukely, Charlotte?

Char. This moment gone—You have been in tears, sister; but here's a friend shall comfort you.

Lew. Or, if I add to your distresses, I'll beg your pardon, madam. The sale of your house and furniture was finished yesterday.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, sir; I know too your generous reason for putting me in mind of it. But you have obliged me too much already.

Lew. There are trifles, madam, which I know you have set a value on; those I have purchased, and will deliver. I have a friend too, that esteems you—He has bought largely, and will call nothing his, till

he has seen you. If a visit to him would not be painful, he has begged it may be this morning.

Mrs. Bev. Not painful in the least. My pain is from the kindness of my friends. Why am I to be obliged beyond the power of return?

Lew. You shall repay us at your own time. I have a coach waiting at the door—Shall we have your company, madam? [*To* Charlotte.

Char. No; my brother may return soon; I'll stay and receive him.

Mrs. Bev. He may want a comforter, perhaps. But don't upbraid him, Charlotte. We sha'n't be absent long. Come, sir, since I must be so obliged.

Lew. 'Tis I that am obliged. An hour, or less, will be sufficient for us. We shall find you at home, madam. [*To* Char. *and exit with Mrs.* Bev.

Char. Certainly. I have but little inclination to appear abroad. Oh, this brother, this brother! to what wretchedness has he reduced us! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Changes to STUKELY'*s Lodgings. Enter* STUKELY.

Stuke. That Lewson suspects me 'tis too plain. Yet why should he suspect me?—I appear the friend of Beverley as much as he. But I am rich, it seems; and so I am, thanks to another's folly, and my own wisdom. To what use is wisdom, but to take advantage of the weak? This Beverley's my fool; I

cheat him, and he calls me friend. But more business must be done yet——His wife's jewels are unsold; so is the reversion of his uncle's estate: I must have these too. And then there's a treasure above all—I love his wife——Before she knew this Beverley I loved her; but, like a cringing fool, bowed at a distance, while he stepp'd in and won her——Never, never will I forgive him for it. My pride, as well as love, is wounded by this conquest. I must have vengeance. Those hints this morning were well thrown in——Already they have fastened on her. If jealousy should weaken her affections, want may corrupt her virtue——My heart rejoices in the hope——These jewels may do much——He shall demand them of her; which, when mine, shall be converted to special purposes——What now, Bates?

Enter BATES.

Bates. Is it a wonder then to see me? The forces are all in readiness, and only wait for orders. Where's Beverley?

Stuke. At last night's rendezvous, waiting for me. Is Dawson with you?

Bates. Dressed like a nobleman; with money in his pocket, and a set of dice that shall deceive the devil.

Stuke. That fellow has a head to undo a nation; but for the rest, they are such low-manner'd, ill-looking dogs, I wonder Beverley has not suspected them.

Bates. No matter for manners and looks. Do you

supply them with money, and they are gentlemen by profession——The passion of gaming casts such a mist before the eyes, that the nobleman shall be surrounded with sharpers, and imagine himself in the best company.

Stuke. There's that Williams too. It was he, I suppose, that called at Beverley's with the note this morning. What directions did you give him?

Bates. To knock loud, and be clamorous. Did not you see him?

Stuke. No, the fool sneaked off with Jarvis. Had he appeared within doors, as directed, the note had been discharged. I waited there on purpose. I want the women to think well of me; for Lewson's grown suspicious; he told me so himself.

Bates. What answer did you make him?

Stuke. A short one——That I would see him soon, for farther explanation.

Bates. We must take care of him. But what have we to do with Beverley? Dawson and the rest are wondering at you.

Stuke. Why, let them wonder. I have designs above their narrow reach. They see me lend him money, and they stare at me. But they are fools. I want him to believe me beggared by him.

Bates. And what then?

Stuke. Ay, there's the question; but no matter; at night you may know more. He waits for me at Wilson's. I told the women where to find him.

Bates. To what purpose?

Stuke. To save suspicion. It looked friendly, and they thanked me. Old Jarvis was dispatched to him.

Bates. And may intreat him home——

Stuke. No; he expects money from me; but I'll have none. His wife's jewels must go——Women are easy creatures, and refuse nothing where they love. Follow to Wilson's; but be sure he sees you not. You are a man of character, you know; of prudence and discretion. Wait for me in an outer room; I shall have business for you presently.—— Come, sir,

Let drudging fools by honesty grow great;
The shorter road to riches is deceit. [Exeunt.

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Gaming House, with a Table, Box, Dice, &c.
BEVERLEY *discovered sitting.*

Beverley.

WHY, what a world is this! The slave that digs for gold, receives his daily pittance, and sleeps contented; while those for whom he labours, convert their good to mischief, making abundance the means of want. Oh, shame, shame! Had Fortune given me but a little, that little had been still my own. But plenty leads to waste; and shallow streams maintain their currents, while swelling rivers beat down their

banks, and leave their channels empty. What had I to do with play? I wanted nothing. My wishes and my means were equal. The poor followed me with blessings, love scattered roses on my pillow, and morning waked me to delight——Oh, bitter thought, that leads to what I was by what I am! I would forget both——Who's there?

Enter a Waiter.

Wait. A gentleman, sir, enquires for you.

Bev. He might have used less ceremony. Stukely, I suppose?

Wait. No, sir, a stranger.

Bev. Well, shew him in. [*Exit Waiter.*

A messenger from Stukely then; from him that has undone me! yet all in friendship——And now he lends me his little, to bring back fortune to me.

Enter JARVIS.

Jarvis!—Why this intrusion?—Your absence had been kinder.

Jar. I came in duty, sir. If it be troublesome—

Bev. It is——I would be private——hid even from myself. Who sent you hither?

Jar. One that would persuade you home again. My mistress is not well; her tears told me so.

Bev. Go with thy duty there then——"But does "she weep? I am to blame to let her weep." Pr'ythee, begone: I have no business for thee.

Jar. Yes, sir; to lead you from this place. I am

your servant still. Your prosperous fortune blessed my old age. If that has left you, I must not leave you.

Bev. Not leave me! Recall past time, then; or, thro' this sea of storms and darkness, shew me a star to guide me——But what canst thou?

Jar. The little that I can I will. You have been generous to me—I would not offend you, sir—but—

Bev. No. Think'st thou I'd ruin thee too? I have enough of shame already———My wife, my wife! Wouldst thou believe it, Jarvis? I have not seen her all this long night——I who have loved her so, that every hour of absence seemed as a gap in life. But other bonds have held me——Oh, I have played the boy! dropping my counters in the stream, and reaching to redeem them, lost myself. "Why wilt thou "follow misery? Or if thou wilt, go to thy mistress: "she has no guilt to sting her; and therefore may "be comforted."

Jar. For pity's sake, sir!——I have no heart to see this change.

Bev. Nor I to bear it——How speaks the world of me, Jarvis?

Jar. As of a good man dead. Of one, who, walking in a dream, fell down a precipice. The world is sorry for you.

Bev. Ay, and pities me. Says it not so? But I was born to infamy——I'll tell thee what it says; it calls me villain, a treacherous husband, a cruel father, a false brother, one lost to nature and her cha-

rities; or, to say all in one short word, it calls me—Gamester.——Go to thy mistress; I'll see her presently.

Jar. And why not now? Rude people press upon her; loud, bawling creditors; wretches, who know no pity—I met one at the door; he would have seen my mistress: I wanted means of present payment, so promised it to-morrow. But others may be pressing, and she has grief enough already. Your absence hangs too heavy on her.

Bev. Tell her I'll come then. I have a moment's business. But what hast thou to do with my distresses? Thy honesty has left thee poor; and age wants comfort——Keep what thou hast "for cordials," lest between thee and the grave, misery steal in. I have a friend shall counsel me——This is that friend.

Enter STUKELY.

Stuke. How fares it, Beverley? Honest Mr. Jarvis, well met; I hoped to find you here. That viper, Williams! Was it not he that troubled you this morning?

Jar. My mistress heard him then?——I am sorry that she heard him.

Bev. And Jarvis promised payment.

Stuke. That must not be. Tell him I'll satisfy him.

Jar. Will you, sir? Heaven will reward you for't.

Bev. Generous Stukely! Friendship like yours, had it ability like will, would more than balance the wrongs of fortune.

Stuke. You think too kindly of me——Make haste to Williams; his clamours may be rude else. [*To* Jar.

Jar. And my master will go home again—Alas! Sir, we know of hearts there breaking for his absence. [*Exit.*

Bev. Would I were dead!

Stuke. "Or turn'd hermit, counting a string of "beads in a dark cave; or under a weeping willow, "praying for mercy on the wicked." Ha, ha, ha! —Pr'ythee, be a man, and leave dying to disease and old age. Fortune may be ours again; at least we'll try for't.

Bev. No; it has fool'd us on too far.

Stuke. Ay, ruin'd us; and therefore we'll sit down contented. These are the despondings of men without money; but let the shining ore chink in the pocket, and folly turns to wisdom. We are fortune's children——True, she's a fickle mother; but shall we droop because she's peevish?——No; she has smiles in store. And these her frowns are meant to brighten 'em.

Bev. Is this a time for levity? But you are single in the ruin, and therefore may talk lightly of it. With me 'tis complicated misery.

Stuke. You censure me unjustly——I but assumed these spirits to cheer my friend. Heaven knows he wants a comforter.

Bev. What new misfortune?

Stuke. I would have brought you money, but lend-

ers want securities. What's to be done? All that was mine is yours already.

Bev. And there's the double weight that sinks me. I have undone my friend too; one, who to save a drowning wretch, reached out his hand, and perished with him.

Stuke. Have better thoughts.

Bev. Whence are they to proceed? I have nothing left.

Stuke. [*Sighing.*] Then we're indeed undone. What nothing? No moveables, nor useless trinkets? Baubles locked up in caskets to starve their owners? I have ventured deeply for you.

Bev. Therefore this heart-ache; for I am lost beyond all hope.

Stuke. No; means may be found to save us. Jarvis is rich. Who made him so? This is no time for ceremony.

Bev. And is it for dishonesty? The good old man! Shall I rob him too? My friend would grieve for't. No; let the little that he has buy food and clothing for him.

Stuke. Good morning then. [*Going.*

Bev. So hasty! Why then, good morning.

Stuke. And when we meet again, upbraid me. Say t was I that tempted you. Tell Lewson so; and tell him I have wrong'd you——He has suspicions of me, and will thank you.

Bev. No; we have been companions in a rash voy-

age, and the same storm has wreck'd us both. Mine shall be self-upbraidings.

Stuke. And will they feed us? You deal unkindly by me. I have sold and borrow'd for you, while land or credit lasted; and now, when fortune should be try'd, and my heart whispers me success, I am deserted; turn'd loose to beggary, while you have hoards.

Bev. What hoards? Name 'em, and take 'em.

Stuke. Jewels.

Bev. And shall this thriftless hand seize them too? My poor, poor wife! Must she lose all? I would not wound her so.

Stuke. Nor I, but from necessity. One effort more, and fortune may grow kind. I have unusual hopes.

Bev. Think of some other means then.

Stuke. I have; and you rejected 'em.

Bev. Pr'ythee, let me be a man.

Stuke. Ay, and your friend a poor one. But I have done. And for these trinkets of a woman, why, let her keep 'em to deck out pride with, and shew a laughing world that she has finery to starve in.

Bev. No; she shall yield up all. My friend demands it. But need we have talk'd lightly of her? The jewels that she values are truth and innocence—Those will adorn her ever; and for the rest, she wore 'em for a husband's pride, and to his wants will give 'em. Alas! you know her not. Where shall we meet?

Stuke. No matter. I have chang'd my mind. Leave me to a prison; 'tis the reward of friendship.

Bev. Perish mankind first——Leave you to a prison! No; fallen as you see me, I'm not that wretch. Nor would I change this heart, o'ercharg'd as 'tis with folly and misfortune, for one most prudent and most happy, if callous to a friend's distress.

Stuke. You are too warm.

Bev. In such a cause, not to be warm is to be frozen. Farewell. I'll meet you at your lodgings.

Stuke. Reflect a little. The jewels may be lost. Better not hazard 'em—I was too pressing.

Bev. And I ungrateful. Reflection takes up time. I have no leisure for't. Within an hour expect me.

[*Exit.*

Stuke. The thoughtless, shallow prodigal! We shall have sport at night, then—But hold——The jewels are not ours yet—The lady may refuse 'em—The husband may relent too—'Tis more than probable—I'll write a note to Beverley, and the contents shall spur him to demand 'em——But am I grown this rogue thro' avarice? No; I have warmer motives, love and revenge—Ruin the husband, and the wive's virtue may be bid for. "'Tis of uncertain "value, and sinks or rises in the purchase, as want "or wealth, or passion governs. The poor part "cheaply with it; rich dames, tho' pleased with "selling, will have high prices for't. Your love-"sick girls give it for oaths and lying. But tender "wives, who boast of honour and affections, keep it "against famine—Why, let famine come then; I am "in haste to purchase."

Enter BATES.

Look to your men, Bates; there's money stirring. We meet to-night upon this spot. Hasten, and tell 'em so. Beverley calls upon me at my lodgings, and we return together. Hasten, I say, the rogues will scatter else.

Bates. Not till their leader bids 'em.

Stuke. Come on, then. Give 'em the word and follow me; I must advise with you——This is a day of business. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Changes to BEVERLEY's *Lodgings.* *Enter* BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Char. Your looks are chang'd too; there's wildness in 'em. My wretched sister! How will it grieve her to see you thus!

Bev. No, no—a little rest will ease me. And for your Lewson's kindness to her, it has my thanks; I have no more to give him.

Char. Yes; a sister and her fortune. I trifle with him, and he complains—My looks, he says, are cold upon him. He thinks too———

Bev. That I have lost your fortune——He dares not think so.

Char. Nor does he—You are too quick at guessing. He cares not if you had. That care is mine—I lent it you to husband, and now I claim it.

Bev. You have suspicions then.

Char. Cure 'em, and give it me.

Bev. To stop a sister's chiding?

Char. To vindicate her brother.

Bev. How if he needs no vindication?

Char. I would fain hope so.

Bev. Ay, would and cannot. Leave it to time, then; 'twill satisfy all doubts.

Char. Mine are already satisfied.

Bev. 'Tis well. And when the subject is renewed, speak to me like a sister, and I will answer like a brother.

Char. To tell me I'm a beggar. Why, tell it now. I that can bear the ruin of those dearer to me, the ruin of a sister and her infant, can bear that too.

Bev. No more of this——you wring my heart.

Char. Would that the misery were all your own! But innocence must suffer———Unthinking rioter! whose home was heaven to him; an angel dwelt there, and a little cherub, that crowned his days with blessings.—How he has lost this heaven to league with devils!

Bev. Forbear, I say; reproaches come too late; they search, but cure not. And for the fortune you demand, we'll talk to-morrow on't; our tempers may be milder.

Char. Or, if 'tis gone, why farewell all. I claimed it for a sister. "She holds my heart in hers; and "every pang she feels tears it in pieces"——But I'll upbraid no more. What Heaven permits, perhaps,

it may ordain; "and sorrow then is sinful." Yet that the husband! father! brother! should be its instruments of vengeance!——'Tis grievous to know that.

Bev. If you're my sister, spare the remembrance—it wounds too deeply. To-morrow shall clear all; and when the worst is known, it may be better than your fears. Comfort my wife; and for the pains of absence, I'll make atonement. The world may yet go well with us.

Char. See where she comes!——Look chearfully upon her——Affections such as hers are prying, and lend those eyes that read the soul.

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY *and* LEWSON.

Mrs. Bev. My life!

Bev. My love! how fares it? I have been a truant husband.

Mrs. Bev. But we meet now, and that heals all—Doubts and alarms I have had; but in this dear embrace I bury and forget 'em. My friend here [*Pointing to* Lewson] has been indeed a friend. Charlotte, 'tis you must thank him: your brother's thanks and mine are of too little value.

Bev. Yet what we have we'll pay. I thank you, sir, and am obliged. I would say more, but that your goodness to the wife upbraids the husband's follies. Had I been wise, she had not trespassed on your bounty.

Lew. Nor has she trespassed. The little I have done, acceptance overpays.

Char. So friendship thinks——

Mrs. Bev. And double obligations by striving to conceal 'em——We'll talk another time on't——You are too thoughtful, love.

Bev. No, I have reason for these thoughts.

Char. And hatred for the cause—Would you had that too!

Bev. I have——The cause was avarice.

Char. And who the tempter?

Bev. A ruined friend—ruined by too much kindness.

Lew. Ay, worse than ruined; stabbed in his fame, mortally stabbed—riches cann't cure him.

Bev. Or if they could, those I have drained him of. Something of this he hinted in the morning—that Lewson had suspicions of him——Why these suspicions? [*Angrily.*

Lew. At school we knew this Stukely. A cunning, plodding boy he was, sordid and cruel, slow at his task, but quick at shifts and tricking. He schemed out mischief, that others might be punished; and would tell his tale with so much art, that for the lash he merited, rewards and praise were given him. Shew me a boy with such a mind, and time, that ripens manhood in him, shall ripen vice too——I'll prove him, and lay him open to you——Till then be warned——I know him, and therefore shun him.

Bev. As I would those that wrong him.—You are too busy, sir.

Mrs. Bev. No, not too busy——Mistaken, perhaps ——That had been milder.

Lew. No matter, madam. I can bear this, and praise the heart that prompts it—Pity such friendship should be so placed!

Bev. Again, sir! But I'll bear too—You wrong him, Lewson, and will be sorry for't.

Char. Ay, when 'tis proved he wrongs him. The world is full of hypocrites.

Bev. And Stukely one—so you would infer, I think.——I'll hear no more of this—my heart aches for him——I have undone him.

Lew. The world says otherwise.

Bev. The world is false then——I have business with you, love. [*To Mrs.* Bev.] We'll leave 'em to their rancour. [*Going.*

Char. No; we shall find room within for't.—— Come this way, sir. [*To* Lew.

Lew. Another time my friend will thank me; that time is hastening too. [*Exeunt* Lew. *and* Char.

Bev. They hurt me beyond bearing——Is Stukely false? Then honesty has left us! 'Twere sinning against Heaven to think so.

Mrs. Bev. I never doubted him.

Bev. No; you are charity. Meekness and ever-during patience live in that heart, and love that knows no change.——Why did I ruin you?

Mrs. Bev. You have not ruined me. I have no

wants when you are present, nor wishes in your absence but to be blest with your return. Be but resign'd to what has happened, and I am rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

Bev. My generous girl!——But memory will be busy; still crowding on my thoughts, to sour the present by the past. I have another pang too.

Mrs. Bev. Tell it, and let me cure it.

Bev. That friend——that generous friend, whose fame they have traduced——I have undone him too. While he had means he lent me largely; and now a prison must be his portion.

Mrs. Bev. No; I hope otherwise.

Bev. To hope must be to act. The charitable wish feeds not the hungry——Something must be done.

Mrs. Bev. What?

Bev. In bitterness of heart he told me, just now he told me, I had undone him. Could I hear that, and think of happiness? No; I have disclaimed it, while he is miserable.

Mrs. Bev. The world may mend with us, and then we may be grateful. There's comfort in that hope.

Bev. Ay; 'tis the sick man's cordial, his promised cure; while in preparing it the patient dies.——What now?

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. A letter, sir. [*Delivers it, and exit.*

Bev. The hand is Stukely's.

[*Opens it, and reads it to himself.*

Mrs. Bev. And brings good news—at least I'll hope so——What says he, love?

Bev. Why this—too much for patience. Yet he directs me to conceal it from you. [*Reads.*] 'Let your haste to see me be the only proof of your esteem for me. I have determined, since we parted, to bid adieu to England; choosing rather to forsake my country, than owe my freedom in it to the means we talked of. Keep this a secret at home, and hasten to the ruined R. STUKELY.'
Ruined by friendship!——I must relieve or follow him.

Mrs. Bev. Follow him, did you say? Then I am lost indeed!

Bev. O this infernal vice! how has it sunk me! A vice, whose highest joy was poor to my domestic happiness. Yet how have I pursued it! turned all my comforts to bitterest pangs, and all my smiles to tears. Damn'd, damn'd infatuation!

Mrs. Bev. Be cool, my life! What are the means the letter talks of? Have you—have I those means? Tell me, and ease me. I have no life while you are wretched.

Bev. No, no; it must not be. 'Tis I alone have sinned; 'tis I alone must suffer. You shall reserve those means to keep my child and his wronged mother from want and wretchedness.

Mrs. Bev. What means?

Bev. I came to rob you of 'em—but cannot—dare

not——Those jewels are your sole support——I should be more than monster to request 'em.

Mrs. Bev. My jewels! Trifles, not worth the speaking of, if weighed against a husband's peace; but let 'em purchase that, and the world's wealth is of less value.

Bev. Amazing goodness! How little do I seem before such virtues!

Mrs. Bev. No more, my love. I kept 'em till occasion called to use 'em; now is the occasion, and I'll resign 'em cheerfully.

Bev. Why we'll be rich in love then. "But this "excess of kindness melts me. Yet for a friend one "would do much—He has denied me nothing."

Mrs. Bev. Come to my closet—But let him manage wisely. We have no more to give him.

Bev. Where learnt my love this excellence? "'Tis "Heaven's own teaching: that Heaven, which to an "angel's form has given a mind more lovely." I am unworthy of you, but will deserve you better.

Henceforth my follies and neglects shall cease,
And all to come be penitence and peace;
Vice shall no more attract me with her charms,
Nor pleasure reach me, but in these dear arms.

[Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE I.

STUKELY's *Lodgings.* *Enter* STUKELY *and* BATES.

Stukely.

So runs the world, Bates. Fools are the natural prey of knaves; Nature designed them so, when she made lambs for wolves. The laws that fear and policy have framed, Nature declaims: she knows but two, and those are force and cunning. The nobler law is force; but then there's danger in't; while cunning, like a skilful miner, works safely and unseen.

Bates. And therefore wisely. Force must have nerves and sinews; cunning wants neither. The dwarf that has it shall trip the giant's heels up.

Stuke. And bind him to the ground. Why, we'll erect a shrine for Nature, and be her oracles. Conscience is weakness; fear made it, and fear maintains it. The dread of shame, inward reproaches, and fictitious burnings swell out the phantom. Nature knows none of this; her laws are freedom.

Bates. Sound doctrine, and well delivered!

Stuke. We are sincere, too, and practise what we teach. Let the grave pedant say as much.—But now to business—The jewels are disposed of: and Beverley again worth money. He waits to count his gold out, and then comes hither. If my design succeeds, this night we finish with him—Go to your lodgings,

and be busy—You understand conveyances, and make ruin sure.

Bates. Better stop here. The sale of this reversion may be talked of—There's danger in it.

Stuke. No, 'tis the mark I aim at. We'll thrive and laugh. You are the purchaser, and there's the payment. [*Giving a pocket-book.*] He thinks you rich; and so you shall be. Enquire for titles, and deal hardly; 'twill look like honesty.

Bates. How if he suspects us.

Stuke. Leave it to me. I study hearts, and when to work upon them. Go to your lodgings; and if we come, be busy over papers. Talk of a thoughtless age, of gaming and extravagance; you have a face for't.

Bates. A feeling too that would avoid it. We push too far; but I have cautioned you. If it ends ill, you'll think of me—and so, adieu. [*Exit.*

Stuke. This fellow sins by halves; his fears are conscience to him. I'll turn these fears to use. Rogues that dread shame, will still be greater rogues to hide their guilt—This shall be thought of. Lewson grows troublesome—We must get rid of him—He knows too much. I have a tale for Beverley; part of it truth, too—He shall call Lewson to account—If it succeeds, 'tis well; if not, we must try other means—But here he comes—I must dissemble.

Enter BEVERLEY.

Look to the door there!—[*In a seeming fright.*]—My friend!—I thought of other visitors.

Bev. No; these shall guard you from them—[*Offering notes.*] Take them, and use them cautiously—The world deals hardly by us.

Stuke. And shall I leave you destitute? No: your wants are the greatest. Another climate may treat *me* kinder. The shelter of to-night takes me from this.

Bev. Let these be your support then—Yet is there need of parting? I may have means again; we'll share them, and live wisely.

Stuke. No: I should tempt you on. Habit is nature in me: ruin cann't cure it. Even now I would be gaming. Taught by experience as I am, and knowing this poor sum is all that's left us, I am for venturing still—And say I am to blame—Yet will this little supply our wants? No, we must put it out to usury. Whether 'tis madness in me, or some restless impulse of good fortune, I yet am ignorant; but——

Bev. Take it, and succeed then. I'll try no more.

Stuke. 'Tis surely impulse; it pleads so strongly—But you are cold——We'll e'en part here then. And for this last reserve, keep it for better uses; I'll have none on't. I thank you though, and will seek fortune singly—One thing I had forgot——

Bev. What is it?

Stuke. Perhaps, 'twere best forgotten. But I am open in my nature, and zealous for the honour of my friend——Lewson speaks freely of you.

Bev. Of you, I know he does.

Stuke. I can forgive him for't; but, for my friend, I'm angry.

Bev. What says he of me?

Stuke. That Charlotte's fortune is embezzled—He talks on't loudly.

Bev. He shall be silenced, then—How heard you of it?

Stuke. From many. He questioned Bates about it. You must account with him, he says.

Bev. Or he with me——and soon, too.

Stuke. Speak mildly to him. Cautions are best.

Bev. I'll think on't—But whither go you?

Stuke. From poverty and prisons—No matter whither. If fortune changes you may hear from me.

Bev. May these be prosperous, then. [*Offering the notes, which he refuses.*] Nay, they are yours——I have sworn it, and will have nothing—Take them and use them.

Stuke. Singly I will not——My cares are for my friend; for his lost fortune and ruined family. All separate interests I disclaim. Together we have fallen; together we must rise. My heart, my honour, and affections, all will have it so.

Bev. I am weary of being fooled.

Stuke. And so am I——Here let us part, then——These bodings of good-fortune shall all be stifled; call them folly, and forget them——This one embrace, and then farewell. [*Offering to embrace.*

Bev. No; stay a moment——How my poor heart's

distracted! I have these bodings too; but whether caught from you, or prompted by my good or evil genius, I know not—The trial shall determine—And yet, my wife.

Stuke. Ay, ay, she'll chide.

Bev. No; my chidings are all here.

[*Pointing to his heart.*

Stuke. I'll not persuade you.

Bev. I am persuaded; by reason too; the strongest reason; Necessity. Oh, could I but regain the height I have fallen from, Heaven should forsake me in my latest hour, if I again mixed in these scenes, or sacrificed the husband's peace, his joy and best affections, to avariee and infamy.

Stuke. I have resolved like you; and since our motives are so honest, why should we fear success?

Bev. Come on, then—Where shall we meet?

Stuke. At Wilson's—Yet if it hurts you, leave me: I have misled you often.

Bev. We have misled each other—But come! Fortune is fickle, and may be tired with plaguing us—— There let us rest our hopes.

Stuke. Yet think a little——

Bev. I cannot——thinking but distracts me.

When desperation leads, all thoughts are vain;
Reason would lose what rashness may obtain.

[Exeunt.

SCENE III.

Changes to BEVERLEY's *Lodgings. Enter Mrs.* BEVERLEY, *and* CHARLOTTE.

Char. 'Twas all a scheme, a mean one; unworthy of my brother.

Mrs. Bev. No, I am sure it was not—Stukely is honest too; I know he is—This madness has undone them both.

Char. My brother irrecoverable—You are too spiritless a wife—A mournful tale, mixed with a few kind words, will steal away your soul. The world's too subtle for such goodness. Had I been by, he should have asked your life sooner than those jewels.

Mrs. Bev. He should have had it, then. [*Warmly.*] I live but to oblige him. She who can love, and is beloved like me, will do as much. Men have done more for mistresses, and women for a base deluder: and shall a wife do less? Your chidings hurt me, Charlotte.

Char. And come too late; they might have saved you else. How could he use you so?

Mrs. Bev. 'Twas friendship did it. His heart was breaking for a friend.

Char. The friend that has betrayed him.

Mrs. Bev. Pr'ythee don't think so.

Char. To-morrow he accounts with me.

Mrs. Bev. And fairly—I will not doubt it.

Char. Unless a friend has wanted——I have no

patience——Sister! sister! we are bound to curse this friend.

Mrs. Bev. My Beverley speaks nobly of him.

Char. And Lewson truly—But I displease you with this talk.——To-morrow will instruct us.

Mrs. Bev. Stay till it comes then——I would not think so hardly.

Char. Nor I, but from conviction——Yet we have hope of better days. My uncle is infirm, and of an age that threatens hourly——Or if he lives, you never have offended him; and for distresses so unmerited he will have pity.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, and am cheerful. We have no more to lose; and for what's gone, if it brings prudence home, the purchase was well made.

Char. My Lewson will be kind too. While he and I have life and means, you shall divide with us—And see, he's here.

Enter LEWSON.

We were just speaking of you.

Lew. 'Tis best to interrupt you then. Few characters will bear a scrutiny; and where the bad outweighs the good, he's safest that's least talked of. What say you, madam? [*To* Charlotte.

Char. That I hate scandal, though a woman——therefore talk seldom of you.

Mrs. Bev. Or, with more truth, that, though a woman, she loves to praise——Therefore talks always of you. I'll leave you to decide it. [*Exit.*

Lew. How good and amiable! I came to talk in private with you; of matters that concern you.

Char. What matters?

Lew. First answer me sincerely to what I ask.

Char. I will—— But you alarm me.

Lew. I am too grave, perhaps; but be assured of this, I have no news that troubles me, and therefore should not you.

Char. I am easy then—Propose your question.

Lew. 'Tis now a tedious twelve-month, since, with an open and kind heart you said you loved me.

Char. So tedious, did you say?

Lew. And when in consequence of such sweet words, I pressed for marriage, you gave a voluntary promise that you would live for me.

Char. You think me changed, then? [*Angrily.*

Lew. I did not say so. A thousand times I have pressed for the performance of this promise: but private cares, a brother's and a sister's ruin, were reasons for delaying it.

Char. I had no other reasons.——Where will this end?

Lew. It shall end presently.

Char. Go on, sir.

Lew. A promise, such as this, given freely, not extorted, the world thinks binding; but I think otherwise.

Char. And would release me from it?

Lew. You are too impatient, madam.

Char. Cool, sir—quite cool—Pray go on.

Lew. Time and a near acquaintance with my faults may have brought change—if it be so; or for a moment, if you have wished this promise were unmade, here I acquit you of it——This is my question then; and with such plainness as I ask it, I shall entreat an answer. Have you repented of this promise?

Char. Stay, sir. The man that can suspect me, shall find me changed——Why am I doubted?

Lew. My doubts are of myself. I have my faults, and you have observation. If from my temper, my words or actions, you have conceived a thought against me, or even a wish for separation, all that has passed is nothing.

Char. You startle me—But tell me—I must be answered first. Is it from honour you speak this? Or do you wish me changed?

Lew. Heaven knows I do not. Life and my Charlotte are so connected, that to lose one, were loss of both. Yet for a promise, though given in love, and meant for binding; if time or accident, or reason should change opinion—with me that promise has no force.

Char. Why, now I'll answer you. Your doubts are prophecies——I am really changed.

Lew. Indeed!

Char. I could torment you now, as you have me; but it is not in my nature.——That I am chang'd, I own: for what at first was inclination, is now grown reason in me; and from that reason, had I the world; nay, were I poorer than the poorest, and you too

wanting bread, with but a hovel to invite me to—I would be yours, and happy.

Lew. My kindest Charlotte! [*Taking her hand.*] Thanks are too poor for this—and words too weak! But if we love so, why should our union be delayed?

Char. For happier times. The present are too wretched.

Lew. I may have reasons that press it now.

Char. What reasons?

Lew. The strongest reasons; unanswerable ones.

Char. Be quick and name them.

Lew. No, madam; I am bound in honour to make conditions first——I am bound by inclination too. This sweet profusion of kind words pains while it pleases. I dread the losing you.

Char. Astonishment! what mean you?

Lew. First promise, that to-morrow, or the next day, you will be mine for ever.

Char. I do——though misery should succeed.

Lew. Thus then I seize you! And with you every joy on this side Heaven!

Char. And thus I seal my promise. [*Embracing him.* Now, sir, your secret.

Lew. Your fortune's lost.

Char. My fortune lost!——I'll study to be humble then. But was my promise claimed for this? How nobly generous! Where learned you this sad news?

Lew. From Bates, Stukely's prime agent. I have

obliged him, and he's grateful—He told it me in friendship, to warn me from my Charlotte.

Char. 'Twas honest in him, and I'll esteem him for't.

Lew. He knows much more than he has told.

Char. For me it is enough. And for your generous love, I thank you from my soul. If you'd oblige me more, give me a little time.

Lew. Why time? It robs us of our happiness.

Char. I have a task to learn first. The little pride this fortune gave me must be subdued. Once we were equal; and might have met obliging and obliged. But now 'tis otherwise; and for a life of obligations, I have not learned to bear it.

Lew. Mine is that life. You are too noble.

Char. Leave me to think on't.

Lew. To-morrow then you'll fix my happiness?

Char. All that I can, I will.

Lew. It must be so; we live but for each other. Keep what you know a secret; and when we meet to-morrow, more may be known.——Farewell. [*Exit.*

Char. My poor, poor sister! how would this wound her! But I'll conceal it, and speak comfort to her.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Changes to a Room in the Gaming-House. Enter BEVERLEY *and* STUKELY.

Bev. Whither would you lead me? [*Angrily.*

Stuke. Where we may vent our curses.

Bev. Ay, on yourself, and those damned counsels that have destroyed me. A thousand fiends were in that bosom, and all let loose to tempt me—I had resisted else.

Stuke. Go on, sir—I have deserved this from you.

Bev. And curses everlasting——Time is too scanty for them——

Stuke. What have I done?

Bev. What the arch-devil of old did—soothed with false hopes for certain ruin.

Stuke. Myself unhurt; nay, pleased at your destruction—So your words mean. Why, tell it to the world. I am too poor to find a friend in't.

Bev. A friend! What's he? I had a friend.

Stuke. And have one still.

Bev. Ay; I'll tell you of this friend. He found me happiest of the happy. Fortune and honour crowned me; and love and peace lived in my heart. One spark of folly lurked there; that too he found; and by deceitful breath blew into flames that have consumed me. This friend were you to me.

Stuke. A little more, perhaps—The friend who gave his all to save you; and not succeeding, chose ruin with you. But no matter, I have undone you and am a villain.

Bev. No; I think not—The villains are within.

Stuke. What villains?

Bev. Dawson and the rest—We have been dupes to sharpers,

Stuke. How know you this? I have had doubts as well as you; yet still as fortune changed I blushed at my own thoughts.——But you have proof, perhaps.

Bev. Ay, damned ones. Repeated losses—Night after night, and no reverse—Chance has no hand in this.

Stuke. I think more charitably; yet I am peevish in my nature, and apt to doubt—The world speaks fairly of this Dawson, so it does of the rest. We have watched them closely too. But 'tis a right usurped by losers, to think the winners knaves—We'll have more manhood in us.

Bev. I know not what to think.——This night has stung me to the quick—Blasted my reputation too—I have bound my honour to these vipers; played meanly upon credit, 'till I tired them; and now they shun me to rifle one another. What's to be done?

Stuke. Nothing. My counsels have been fatal.

Bev. By Heaven I'll not survive this shame—Traitor! 'tis you have brought it on me. [*Taking hold of him.*] Shew me the means to save me, or I'll commit a murder here, and next upon myself.

Stuke. Why do it then, and rid me of ingratitude.

Bev. Pr'ythee forgive this language—I speak I know not what—Rage and despair are in my heart, and hurry me to madness. My home is horror to me—I'll not return to it. Speak quickly; tell me, if in this wreck of fortune, one hope remains? Name it, and be my oracle.

Stuke. To vent your curses on—You have bestowed them liberally. Take your own counsel; and should a desperate hope present itself, 'twill suit your desperate fortune. I'll not advise you.

Bev. What hope? By Heaven I'll catch at it, however desperate. I am so sunk in misery, it cannot lay me lower.

Stuke. You have an uncle.

Bev. Ay, what of him?

Stuke. Old men live long by temperance; while their heirs starve on expectation.

Bev. What mean you?

Stuke. That the reversion of his estate is yours; and will bring money to pay debts with—Nay more, it may retrieve what's past.

Bev. Or leave my child a beggar.

Stuke. And what's his father? A dishonourable one; engaged for sums he cannot pay——That should be thought of.

Bev. It is my shame—The poison that inflames me. Where shall we go? To whom? I'm impatient till all's lost.

Stuke. All may be your's again—Your man is Bates—He has large funds at his command, and will deal justly by you.

Bev. I am resolved—Tell them within we'll meet them presently; and with full purses, too——Come, follow me.

Stuke. No. I'll have no hand in this; nor do I counsel it—Use your discretion, and act from that. You'll find me at my lodgings.

Bev. *Succeed what will, this night I'll dare the worst.*
'Tis loss of fear to be completely curs'd. [Exit.

Stuke. Why, lose it then for ever——Fear is the mind's worst evil; and 'tis a friendly office to drive it from the bosom—Thus far has fortune crowned me—Yet Beverley is rich; rich in his wife's best treasure, her honour and affections. I would supplant him there too. But 'tis the curse of thinking minds to raise up difficulties. Fools only conquer women. Fearless of dangers which they see not, they press on boldly, and by persisting, prosper. Yet may a tale of art do much——Charlotte is sometimes absent. The seeds of jealousy are sown already. If I mistake not, they have taken root too. Now is the time to ripen them, and reap the harvest. The softest of her sex, if wronged in love, or thinking that she's wronged, becomes a tygress in revenge—I'll instantly to Beverley's——No matter for the danger——When beauty leads us on, 'tis indiscretion to reflect, and cowardice to doubt. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Changes to BEVERLEY's *Lodgings. Enter Mrs.* BEVERLEY *and* LUCY.

Mrs. Bev. Did Charlotte tell you any thing?

Lucy. No, madam.

Mrs. Bev. She look'd confused, methought; said she

had business with her Lewson; which, when I pressed to know, tears only were her answer.

Lucy. She seemed in haste, too—Yet her return may bring you comfort.

Mrs. Bev. No, my kind girl; I was not born for't—But why do I distress thee? Thy sympathising heart bleeds for the ills of others—What pity that thy mistress cann't reward thee! But there's a Power above, that sees, and will remember all. [*Knocking.*] "Pr'ythee sooth me with the song thou sungest last "night. It suits this change of fortune; and there's "a melancholy in't that pleases me.

"*Lucy.* I fear it hurts you, madam. Your good-"ness, too, draws tears from me—But I'll dry them, "and obey you.

SONG.

"*When Damon languish'd at my feet,*
"*And I believ'd him true,*
"*The moments of delight how sweet!*
"*But, ah! how swift they flew!*
"*The sunny hill, the flow'ry vale,*
"*The garden and the grove,*
"*Have echo'd to his ardent tale,*
"*And vows of endless love.*

"*The conquest gain'd, he left his prize,*
"*He left her to complain,*
"*To talk of joy with weeping eyes,*
"*And measure time by pain.*

" *But Heav'n will take the mourner's part,*
" *In pity to despair;*
" *And the last sigh that rends the heart,*
" *Shall waft the spirit there.*

" *Mrs. Bev.* I thank thee, Lucy; I thank Heaven " too, my griefs are none of these. Yet Stukely " deals in hints; he talks of rumours; I'll urge him " to speak plainly."——Hark! there's some one entering.

Lucy. Perhaps 'tis my master, madam. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bev. Let him be well too, and I am satisfied. [*Goes to the door and listens.*] No, 'tis another's voice; his had been music to me. Who is it, Lucy?

Re-enter LUCY *with* STUKELY.

Lucy. Mr. Stukely, madam. [*Exit.*

Stuke. To meet you thus alone, madam, was what I wished. Unseasonable visits, when friendship warrants them, need no excuse—therefore I make none.

Mrs. Bev. What mean you, sir? And where is your friend?

Stuke. Men may have secrets, madam, which their best friends are not admitted to. We parted in the morning, not soon to meet again.

Mrs. Bev. You mean to leave us then; to leave your country too. I am no stranger to your reasons, and pity your misfortunes.

Stuke. Your pity has undone you. Could Beverley do this? That letter was a false one; a mean

contrivance to rob you of your jewels——I wrote it not.

Mrs. Bev. Impossible! Whence came it then?

Stuke. Wrong'd as I am, madam, I must speak plainly.

Mrs. Bev. Do so, and ease me. Your hints have troubled me. Reports, you say, are stirring—Reports of whom? You wished me not to credit them. What, sir, are these reports?

Stuke. I thought them slander, madam; and cautioned you in friendship, lest from officious tongues the tale had reached you with double aggravation.

Mrs. Bev. Proceed, sir.

Stuke. It is a debt due to my fame; due to an injured wife too——We are both injured.

Mrs. Bev. How injured? And who has injured us?

Stuke. My friend, your husband.

Mrs. Bev. You would resent for both then——But know, sir, my injuries are my own, and do not need a champion.

Stuke. Be not too hasty, madam. I come not in resentment, but for acquittance. You thought me poor; and to the feign'd distresses of a friend gave up your jewels.

Mrs. Bev. I gave them to a husband.

Stuke. Who gave them to a———

Mrs. Bev. What, whom did he give them to?

Stuke. A mistress.

Mrs. Bev. No, on my life he did not.

Stuke. Himself confessed it, with curses on her avarice.

Mrs. Bev. I'll not believe it—He has no mistress; or if he has, why is it told to me?

Stuke. To guard you against insults. He told me, that, to move you to compliance, he forged that letter, pretending I was ruin'd, ruin'd by him too. The fraud succeeded; and what a trusting wife bestowed in pity, was lavished on a wanton.

Mrs. Bev. Then I am lost indeed! and my afflictions are too powerful for me. His follies I have borne without upbraiding, and saw the approach of poverty without a tear——My affections, my strong affections, supported me through every trial.

Stuke. Be patient, madam.

Mrs. Bev. Patient! The barbarous, ungrateful man! And does he think that the tenderness of my heart is his best security for wounding it? But he shall find that injuries such as these can arm my weakness for vengeance and redress.

Stuke. Ha! then I may succeed. [*Aside.*] Redress is in your power.

Mrs. Bev. What redress?

Stuke. Forgive me, madam, if, in my zeal to serve you, I hazard your displeasure. Think of your wretched state. Already want surrounds you—Is it in patience to bear that? To see your helpless little one robbed of his birth-right? A sister, too, with unavailing tears lamenting her lost fortune? No com-

fort left you, but ineffectual pity from the few, outweigh'd by insults from the many.

Mrs. Bev. Am I so lost a creature?——Well, sir, my redress?

Stuke. To be resolv'd is to secure it. The marriage vow, once violated, is, in the sight of Heaven, dissolved—Start not, but hear me. 'Tis now the summer of your youth; time has not cropt the roses from your cheek, tho' sorrow long has washed them ——Then use your beauty wisely, and, freed by injuries, fly from the cruellest of men for shelter with the kindest.

Mrs. Bev. And who is he?

Stuke. A friend to the unfortunate; a bold one too, who, while the storm is bursting on your brow, and lightning flashing from your eyes, dares tell you that he loves you.

Mrs. Bev. Would that these eyes had Heaven's own lightning, that, with a look, thus I might blast thee! Am I then fallen so low? Has poverty so humbled me, that I should listen to a hellish offer, and sell my soul for bread? Oh, villain, villain!——But now I know thee, and thank thee for the knowledge.

Stuke. If you are wise, you shall have cause to thank me.

Mrs. Bev. An injured husband too, shall thank thee.

Stuke. Yet know, proud woman, I have a heart as stubborn as your own; as haughty and imperious; and as it loves, so can it hate

Mrs. Bev. Mean, despicable villain! I scorn thee and thy threats. Was it for this that Beverley was false? that his too credulous wife should, in despair and vengeance, give up her honour to a wretch? But he shall know it, and vengeance shall be his.

Stuke. Why send him for defiance then. Tell him I love his wife; but that a worthless husband forbids our union. I'll make a widow of you, and court you honourably.

Mrs. Bev. Oh, coward, coward! thy soul will shrink at him. Yet, in the thought of what may happen, I feel a woman's fears. Keep thy own secret, and begone. Who's there?

Enter LUCY.

Your absence, sir, would please me.

Stuke. I'll not offend you, madam.

[*Exit* Stukely *with* Lucy,

Mrs. Bev. Why opens not the earth to swallow such a monster? Be conscience, then, his punisher, till Heaven, in mercy, gives him penitence, or dooms him in his justice.

Re-enter LUCY.

Come to my chamber, Lucy; I have a tale to tell thee, shall make thee weep for thy poor mistress.

Yet Heaven the guiltless sufferer regards;
And whom it most afflicts it most rewards. [Exeunt.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

BEVERLEY's *Lodgings.* *Enter Mrs.* BEVERLEY, CHARLOTTE, *and* LEWSON.

Charlotte.

THE smooth-tongu'd hypocrite!

Lew. But we have found him, and will requite him ——Be cheerful, madam; [*To Mrs.* Bev.] and for the insults of this ruffian you shall have ample retribution.

Mrs. Bev. But not by violence——Remember, you have sworn it; I had been silent else.

Lew. You need not doubt me; I shall be cool as patience.

Mrs. Bev. See him to-morrow then.

Lew. And why not now? By Heaven, the veriest worm that crawls is made of braver spirit than this Stukely——Yet, for my promise, I'll deal gently with him—I mean to watch his looks—From those, and from his answers to my charge, much may be learnt. Next I'll to Bates, and sift him to the bottom: if I fail there, the gang is numerous, and for a bribe will each betray the other——Good night; I'll lose no time. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bev. These boisterous spirits, how they wound me! But reasoning is in vain. Come, Charlotte, we'll to our usual watch. The night grows late.

Char. I am fearful of events; yet pleased——To-morrow may relieve us. [*Going.*

Enter JARVIS.

How now, good Jarvis?

Jar. I have heard ill news, madam.

Mrs. Bev. What news? Speak quickly.

Jar. Men are not what they seem. I fear me Mr. Stukely is dishonest.

Char. We know it, Jarvis. But what's your news?

Jar. That there's an action against my master, at his friend's suit.

Mrs. Bev. Oh, villain, villain! 'twas this he threatened then. Run to that den of robbers, Wilson's—Your master may be there. Entreat him home, good Jarvis. Say I have business with him—But tell him not of Stukely—It may provoke him to revenge——Haste, haste, good Jarvis. [*Exit* Jarvis.

Char. This minister of hell! Oh, I could tear him piece-meal!———

Mrs. Bev. I am sick of such a world——Yet Heaven is just; and, in its own good time, will hurl destruction on such monsters. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Changes to STUKELY's *Lodgings. Enter* STUKELY *and* BATES *meeting.*

Bates. Where have you been?

Stuke. Fooling my time away; playing my tricks, like a tame monkey, to entertain a woman—No mat-

ter where——I have been vexed and disappointed. Tell me of Beverley; how bore he his last shock?

Bates. Like one (so Dawson says) whose senses had been numb'd with misery. When all was lost, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, and stood some time, with folded arms, stupid and motionless; then snatching his sword, that hung against the wainscot, he sat him down, and with a look of fix'd attention, drew figures on the floor. At last, he started up, look'd wild, and trembled; and, like a woman seized with her sex's fits, laughed out aloud, while the tears trickled down his face—so left the room.

Stuke. Why, this was madness.

Bates. The madness of despair.

Stuke. We must confine him then. A prison would do well. [*A knocking at the door.*] Hark! that knocking may be his. Go that way down. [*Exit* Bates.]—Who's there?

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. An enemy—an open and avowed one.

Stuke. Why am I thus broke in upon? This house is mine, sir; and should protect me from insult and ill-manners.

Lew. Guilt has no place of sanctuary; wherever found, 'tis virtue's lawful game. The fox's hold and tyger's den are no security against the hunter.

Stuke. Your business, sir?

Lew. To tell you that I know you——Why this confusion? That look of guilt and terror? Is Be-

verley awake; or has his wife told tales? The man that dares like you, should have a soul to justify his deeds, and courage to confront accusers: not, with a coward's fear, to shrink beneath reproof.

Stuke. Who waits there? [*Aloud, and in confusion.*

Lew. By Heaven, he dies that interrupts us. [*Shutting the door.*] You should have weighed your strength, sir; and then, instead of climbing to high fortune, the world had marked you for what you are, a little paltry villain.

Stuke. You think I fear you.

Lew. I know you fear me. This is to prove it. [*Pulls him by the sleeve.*] You wanted privacy—A lady's presence took up your attention——Now we are alone, sir. Why, what a wretch! [*Flings him from him.*] The vilest insect in creation will turn when trampled on; yet has this thing undone a man—by cunning and mean arts undone him. But we have found you, sir; trac'd you through all your labyrinths. If you would save yourself, fall to confession: no mercy will be shewn else.

Stuke. First prove me what you think me—till then, your threatenings are in vain——And for this insult, vengeance may yet be mine.

Lew. Infamous coward! why, take it now then—[*Draws, and* Stukely *retires.*] Alas, I pity thee!——Yet that a wretch like this should overcome a Beverley! It fills me with astonishment!——A wretch, so mean of soul, that even desperation cannot animate

him to look upon an enemy. You should not have thus soar'd, sir, unless, like others of your black profession, you had a sword to keep the fools in awe, your villany has ruin'd.

Stuke. Villany! 'Twere best to curb this licence of your tongue; for know, sir, while there are laws, this outrage on my reputation will not be borne with.

Lew. Laws! Dar'st thou seek shelter from the laws, those laws which thou and thy infernal crew live in the constant violation of? Talk'st thou of reputation too, when, under friendship's sacred name, thou hast betrayed, robbed, and destroyed?

Stuke. Ay, rail at gaming; 'tis a rich topic, and affords noble declamation——Go, preach against it in the city: you'll find a congregation in every tavern. If they should laugh at you, fly to my lord, and sermonize it there: he'll thank you, and reform.

Lew. And will example sanctify a vice? No, wretch; the custom of my lord, or of the cit that apes him, cannot excuse a breach of law, or make the gamester's calling reputable.

Stuke. Rail on, I say——But is this zeal for beggared Beverley? Is it for him that I am treated thus? No; he and his wife might both have groaned in prison, had but the sister's fortune escaped the wreck, to have rewarded the disinterested love of honest Mr. Lewson.

Lew. How I detest thee for the thought! But thou

art lost to every human feeling. Yet let me tell thee, and may it wring thy heart, that tho' my friend is ruined by thy snares, thou hast unknowingly been kind to me.

Stuke. Have I? It was, indeed, unknowingly.

Lew. Thou hast assisted me in love; given me the merit that I wanted; since, but for thee, my Charlotte had not known 'twas her dear self I sigh'd for, and not her fortune.

Stuke. Thank me, and take her then.

Lew. And, as a brother to poor Beverley, I will pursue the robber that has stripped him, and snatch him from his gripe.

Stuke. Then know, imprudent man, he is within my gripe; and should my friendship for him be slandered once again, the hand that has supplied him shall fall and crush him.

Lew. Why, now there's a spirit in thee! This is indeed to be a villain! But I shall reach thee yet—Fly where thou wilt, my vengeance shall pursue thee ——And Beverley shall yet be sav'd; be sav'd from thee, thou monster! nor owe his rescue to his wife's dishonour. [*Exit.*

Stuke. [*Pausing.*] Then ruin has enclosed me.—Curse on my coward heart! I would be bravely villanous; but 'tis my nature to shrink at danger, and he has found me. Yet fear brings caution, and that security——More mischief must be done to hide the past——Look to yourself, officious Lewson—there may be danger stirring——How now, Bates?

Enter BATES.

Bates. What is the matter? 'Twas Lewson, and not Beverley, that left you—I heard him loud—You seem alarmed too.

Stuke. Ay, and with reason——We are discovered.

Bates. I feared as much; and therefore cautioned you. But you were peremptory.

Stuke. Thus fools talk ever; spending their idle breath on what is past, and trembling at the future. We must be active. Beverley, at worst, is but suspicious; but Lewson's genius, and his hate to me, will lay all open. Means must be found to stop him.

Bates. What means?

Stuke. Dispatch him——Nay, start not——Desperate occasions call for desperate deeds——We live but by his death.

Bates. You cannot mean it?

Stuke. I do, by Heaven.

Bates. Good night, then. [*Going.*

Stuke. Stay. I must be heard, then answered. Perhaps the motion was too sudden; and human weakness starts at murder, tho' strong necessity compels it. I have thought long of this; and my first feelings were like yours; a foolish conscience awed me, which soon I conquered. The man that would undo me, Nature cries out, undo. Brutes know their foes by instinct; and where superior force is given, they use it for destruction. Shall man do less? Lewson pursues us to our ruin; and shall we, with the

means to crush him, fly from our hunter, or turn and tear him? 'Tis folly even to hesitate.

Bates. He has obliged me, and I dare not.

Stuke. Why, live to shame then, to beggary and punishment. You would be privy to the deed, yet want the soul to act it. Nay, more, had my designs been levelled at his fortune, you had stepped in the foremost——And what is life without its comforts? Those you would rob him of, and by a lingering death add cruelty to murder. Henceforth adieu to half-made villains—There's danger in them. What you have got is yours; keep it, and hide with it—— I'll deal my future bounty to those that merit it.

Bates. What's the reward?

Stuke. Equal division of our gains. I swear it, and will be just.

Bates. Think of the means then.

Stuke. He's gone to Beverley's——Wait for him in the street—'Tis a dark night, and fit for mischief. A dagger would be useful.

Bates. He sleeps no more.

Stuke. Consider the reward. When the deed's done, I have farther business with you. Send Dawson to me.

Bates. Think it already done—and so, farewell. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Why, farewell Lewson, then; and farewell to my fears. This night secures me. I'll wait the event within. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Changes to the Street. Stage darkened. Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. How like an out-cast do I wander? Loaded with every curse that drives the soul to desperation—The midnight robber, as he walks his rounds, sees by the glimmering lamp my frantic looks, and dreads to meet me. Whither am I going? My home lies there; all that is dear on earth it holds too; yet are the gates of death more welcome to me—I'll enter it no more——Who passes there? 'Tis Lewson——He meets me in a gloomy hour; and memory tells me he has been meddling with my fame.

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. Beverley! Well met. I have been busy in your affairs.

Bev. So I have heard, sir; and now must thank you as I ought.

Lew. To-morrow I may deserve your thanks. Late as it is, I go to Bates. Discoveries are making that an arch villain trembles at.

Bev. Discoveries are made, sir, that you shall tremble at. Where is this boasted spirit, this high demeanour, that was to call me to account? You say I have wrong'd my sister——Now say as much. But first be ready for defence, as I am for resentment.

[*Draws.*

Lew. What mean you? I understand you not.

Bev. The coward's stale acquaintance! who, when he spreads foul calumny abroad, and dreads just vengeance on him, cries out, What mean you? I understand you not.

Lew. Coward and calumny! Whence are those words? But I forgive, and pity you.

Bev. Your pity had been kinder to my fame. But you have traduced it; told a vile story to the public ear, that I have wronged my sister.

Lew. 'Tis false. Shew me the man that dares accuse me.

Bev I thought you brave, and of a soul superior to low malice; but I have found you, and will have vengeance. This is no place for argument.

Lew. Nor shall it be for violence. Imprudent man! who, in revenge for fancied injuries, would pierce the heart that loves him. But honest friendship acts from itself, unmoved by slander "or ingratitude. "The life you thirst for shall be employed to serve "you.

"*Bev.* 'Tis thus you would compound then——— "First, do a wrong beyond forgiveness, and, to re- "dress it, load me with kindnesses unsolicited. I'll "not receive it. Your zeal is troublesome.

"*Lew.* No matter. It shall be useful.

"*Bev.* It will not be accepted.

"*Lew.* It must." You know me not.

Bev. Yes, for the slanderer of my fame; who, under shew of friendship, arraigns me of injustice;

buzzing in every ear foul breach of trust, and family dishonour.

Lew. Have I done this? Who told you so?

Bev. The world——'Tis talked of every where. It pleased you to add threats too. You were to call me to account——Why, do it now, then: I shall be proud of such an arbiter.

Lew. Put up your sword, and know me better. I never injured you. The base suggestion comes from Stukely: I see him and his aims.

Bev. What aims? I'll not conceal it; 'twas Stukely that accused you.

Lew. To rid him of an enemy—Perhaps of two—He fears discovery, and frames a tale of falsehood, to ground revenge and murder on.

Bev. I must have proof of this.

Lew. Wait till to-morrow then.

Bev. I will.

Lew. Good night——I go to serve you——Forget what's past, as I do; and cheer your family with smiles. To-morrow may confirm them, and make all happy. [*Exit.*

Bev. [*Pausing.*] How vile, and how absurd is man! His boasted honour is but another name for pride, which easier bears the consciousness of guilt, than the world's just reproofs. But 'tis the fashion of the times; and in defence of falsehood and false honour men die martyrs. I knew not that my nature was so bad. [*Stands musing.*

Enter BATES, *and* JARVIS.

Jar. This way the noise was; and yonder's my poor master.

Bates. I heard him at high words with Lewson. The cause I know not.

Jar. I heard him too. Misfortunes vex him.

Bates. Go to him, and lead him home. But he comes this way——I'll not be seen by him. [*Exit.*

Bev. [*Starting.*] What fellow's that? [*Seeing* Jarvis.] Art thou a murderer, friend? Come, lead the way; I have a hand as mischievous as thine; a heart as desperate too——Jarvis!——To bed, old man; the cold will chill thee.

Jar. Why are you wandering at this late hour? Your sword drawn too?—For Heaven's sake, sheath it, sir—the sight distracts me.

Bev. Whose voice was that? [*Wildly.*

Jar. 'Twas mine, sir. Let me intreat you to give the sword to me.

Bev. Ay, take it—quickly take it—Perhaps I am not so curs'd, but Heaven may have sent thee at this moment to snatch me from perdition.

Jar. Then I am bless'd.

Bev. Continue so, and leave me: my sorrows are contagious. No one is bless'd that's near me.

Jar. I came to seek you, sir.

Bev. And now thou hast found me, leave me—My thoughts are wild, and will not be disturbed.

Jar. Such thoughts are best disturbed.

Bev. I tell thee that they will not. Who sent thee hither?

Jar. My weeping mistress.

Bev. Am I so meek a husband then, that a commanding wife prescribes my hours, and sends to chide me for my absence?——Tell her I'll not return.

Jar. Those words would kill her.

Bev. Kill her! Would they not be kind, then? But she shall live to curse me——I have deserved it of her. Does she not hate me, Jarvis?

Jar. Alas, sir, forget your griefs, and let me lead you to her! The streets are dangerous.

Bev. Be wise, and leave me then. The night's black horrors are suited to my thoughts—These stones shall be my resting-place. [*Lies down.*] Here shall my soul brood o'er it's miseries, till, with the fiends of hell, and guilty of the earth, I start and tremble at the morning's light.

Jar. For pity's sake, sir——Upon my knees, I beg you to quit this place, and these sad thoughts.—Let patience, not despair, possess you——Rise, I beseech you——There's not a moment of your absence, that my poor mistress does not groan for.

Bev. Have I undone her, and is she still so kind? [*Starting up.*] It is too much—My brain cann't hold it——Oh, Jarvis, how desperate is that wretch's state, which only death or madness can relieve.

Jar. Appease his mind, good Heaven, and give him resignation! Alas, sir, could beings in the other world

perceive the events of this, how would your parents blessed spirits grieve for you even in Heaven!—Let me conjure you, by their honoured memories; by the sweet innocence of your yet helpless child, and by the ceaseless sorrows of my poor mistress, to rouse your manhood, and struggle with these griefs.

Bev. Thou virtuous, good old man! thy tears and thy entreaties have reached my heart, through all its miseries.

" *Jar.* Be but resigned, sir, and happiness may yet be yours.

" *Bev.* Pr'ythee be honest, and do not flatter mi-
" sery.

Jar. I do not, sir."—Hark! I hear voices—Come this way; we may reach home unnoticed.

Bev. " Well, lead me then."——Unnoticed, didst thou say? Alas I dread no looks but of those wretches I have made at home! Oh, had I listened to thy honest warnings, no earthly blessing had been wanting to me!——I was so happy, that even a wish for more than I possessed, was arrogant presumption. But I have warred against the power that blessed me; and now am forced to the hell I merit. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Changes to STUKELY'*s.* *Enter* STUKELY *and* DAWSON.

Stuke. Come hither, Dawson. My limbs are on the

rack, and my soul shivers in me, till this night's business be complete. Tell me thy thoughts; is Bates determined, or does he waver?

Daw. At first he seemed irresolute; wished the employment had been mine; and muttered curses on his coward hand, that trembled at the deed.

Stuke. And did he leave you so?

Daw. No; we walked together, and, sheltered by the darkness, saw Beverley and Lewson in warm debate. But soon they cooled, and then I left them to hasten hither; but not till 'twas resolved Lewson should die.

Stuke. Thy words have given me life. That quarrel, too, was fortunate; for, if my hopes deceive me not, it promises a grave to Beverley.

Daw. You misconceive me. Lewson and he were fends.

Stuke. But my prolific brain shall make them enemies. If Lewson falls, he falls by Beverley. An upright jury shall decree it. Ask me no question; but do as I direct. This writ, [*Takes out a pocket-book.*] for some days past, I have treasured here, till a convenient time called for its use. That time is come. Take it, and give it to an officer. It must be served this instant. [*Gives a paper.*

Daw. On Beverley!

Stuke. Look at it. 'Tis for the sums that I have lent him.

Daw. Must he to prison then?

Stuke. I asked obedience, not replies. This night

a jail must be his lodging. 'Tis probable he's not gone home yet. Wait at his door, and see it executed.

Daw. Upon a beggar?——He has no means of payment.

Stuke. Dull and insensible!—If Lewson dies, who was it killed him?——Why, he that was seen quarrelling with him: and I, that knew of Beverley's intents, arrested him in friendship——A little late, perhaps; but 'twas a virtuous act, and men will thank me for't. Now, sir, you understand me?

Daw. Most perfectly; and will about it.

Stuke. Haste, then; and when 'tis done, come back and tell me.

Daw. Till then, farewell. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Now tell thy tale, fond wife! And, Lewson, if again thou canst insult me, "I'll kneel, and own "thee for my master."

Not avarice now, but vengeance fires my breast,
And one short hour must make me curs'd or bless'd.

[Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Continues. *Enter* STUKELY, BATES, *and* DAWSON.

Bates.

POOR Lewson!——But I told you enough last night. The thought of him is horrible to me.

Stuke. In the street, did you say? And no one near him?

Bates. By his own door; he was leading me to his house. I pretended business with him, and stabbed him to the heart, while he was reaching at the bell.

Stuke. And did he fall so suddenly?

Bates. The repetition pleases you, I see. I told you he fell without a groan.

Stuke. What heard you of him this morning?

Bates. That the watch found him in their rounds, and alarmed the servants. I mingled with the crowd just now, and saw him dead in his own house——The sight terrified me.

Stuke. Away with terrors, till his ghost rise and accuse us. We have no living enemy to fear, unless 'tis Beverley; and him we have lodged safe in prison.

Bates. Must he be murdered too?

Stuke. No; I have a scheme to make the law his murderer. At what hour did Lewson fall?

Bates. The clock struck twelve as I turned to leave him. 'Twas a melancholy bell, I thought, tolling for his death.

Stuke. The time was lucky for us——Beverley was arrested at one, you say? [*To* Dawson.

Daw. Exactly.

Stuke. Good. We'll talk of this presently. The women were with him, I think?

Daw. And old Jarvis. I would have told you of

them last night, but your thoughts were too busy.—'Tis well you have a heart of stone; the tale would melt it else.

Stuke. Out with it, then.

Daw. I traced him to his lodgings; and, pretending pity for his misfortunes, kept the door open, while the officers seized him. 'Twas a damned deed—but no matter——I followed my instructions.

Stuke. And what said he?

Daw. He upbraided me with treachery, called you a villain, acknowledged the sums you had lent him, and submitted to his fortune.

Stuke. And the women——

Daw. For a few minutes astonishment kept them silent. They looked wildly at one another, while the tears streaming down their cheeks. But rage and fury soon gave them words; and then, in the very bitterness of despair, they cursed me, and the monster that had employed me.

Stuke. And you bore it with philosophy?

Daw. 'Till the scene changed, and then I melted. I ordered the officers to take away their prisoner. The women shrieked and would have followed him; but we forbade them. 'Twas then they fell upon their knees, the wife fainted, the sister raving, and both, with all the eloquence of misery, endeavouring to soften us. I never felt compassion till that moment; and had the officers been moved like me, we had left the business undone, and fled with curses on ourselves. But their hearts were steeled by custom.

The tears of beauty, and the pangs of affection were beneath their pity. They tore him from their arms, and lodged him in prison, with only Jarvis to comfort him.

Stuke. There let him lie, 'till we have farther business with him——"And for you, sir, let me hear no "more of your compassion——A fellow nursed in "villany, and employed from childhood in the busi- "ness of hell, should have no dealings with com- "passion.

"*Daw.* Say you so, sir?—You should have named "the devil that tempted me——

"*Stuke.* 'Tis false. I found you a villain, and "therefore employed you—but no more of this—We "have embarked too far in mischief to recede. Lew- "son is dead, and we are all principals in his murder. "Think of that—There's time enough for pity when "ourselves are out of danger——Beverley still lives, "though in a gaol—His ruin will sit heavy on him; "and discoveries may be made to undo us all. Some- "thing must be done, and speedily.——You saw him "quarrelling with Lewson in the street last night.

["*To* Bates.

"*Bates.* I did; his steward, Jarvis, saw him too.

"*Stuke.* And shall attest it. Here's matter to work "upon.—An unwilling evidence carries weight with "him." Something of my design I have hinted t'you before—Beverley must be the author of this murder; and we the parties to convict him——But how to proceed will require time and thought——Come along

with me; the room within is fitted for privacy—But no compassion, sir [*To* Dawson.]—We want leisure for't——This way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Changes to BEVERLEY's *Lodgings. Enter Mrs.* BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. No news of Lewson yet?

Char. None. He went out early, and knows not what has happened.

Mrs. Bev. The clock strikes eight——I'll wait no longer.

Char. Stay but 'till Jarvis comes. He has sent twice to stop us 'till we see him.

Mrs. Bev. I have no life in this separation——Oh, what a night was last night! I would not pass another such to purchase worlds by it——My poor Beverley too! What must he have felt?——The very thought distracts me——To have him torn at midnight from me! A loathsome prison his habitation! A cold damp room his lodging! The bleak winds perhaps blowing upon his pillow! No fond wife to lull him to his rest! and no reflections but to wound and tear him!——'Tis too horrible——I wanted love for him, or they had not forced him from me.——They should have parted soul and body first—I was too tame.

Char. You must not talk so.——All that we could

we did; and Jarvis did the rest—The faithful creature will give him comfort. Why does he delay coming?

Mrs. Bev. And there's another fear. His poor master may be claiming the last kind office from him—His heart perhaps is breaking.

Char. See where he comes—His looks are cheerful too.

Enter JARVIS.

Mrs. Bev. Are tears then cheerful? Alas, he weeps! Speak to him, Charlotte——I have no tongue to ask him quesions.

Char. How does your master, Jarvis?

Jar. I am old and foolish, madam; and tears will come before my words—But don't you weep; [*To Mrs.* Bev.] I have a tale of joy for you.

Mrs. Bev. What tale?——Say but he's well, and I have joy enough.

Jar. His mind too shall be well—all shall be well—I have news for him, that will make his poor heart bound again——Fie upon old age——How childish it makes me! I have a tale of joy for you, and my tears drown it.

Char. Shed them in showers then, and make haste to tell it.

Mrs. Bev. What is it, Jarvis?

Jar. Yet why should I rejoice when a good man dies? Your uncle, madam, died yesterday.

Mrs. Bev. My uncle!——Oh, Heavens!

Char. How heard you of his death?

Jar. His steward came express, madam—I met him in the street, enquiring for your lodgings — I should not rejoice perhaps—but he was old, and my poor master a prisoner—Now he shall live again—Oh, 'tis a brave fortune! and 'twas death to me to see him a prisoner.

Char. Where left you the steward?

Jar. I would not bring him hither, to be a witness of your distresses; and besides, I wanted, once before I die, to be the messenger of joy to you. My good master will be a man again.

Mrs. Bev. Haste, haste then; and let us fly to him! We are delaying our own happiness.

Jar. I had forgot a coach, madam, and Lucy has ordered one.

Mrs. Bev. Where was the need of that? The news has given me wings.

Char. I have no joy, 'till my poor brother shares it with me. How did he pass the night, Jarvis?

Jar. Why now, madam, I can tell you. Like a man dreaming of death and horrors. When they led him to his cell—For 'twas a poor apartment for my master—He flung himself upon a wretched bed, and lay speechless 'till day-break. A sigh now and then, and a few tears that follow those sighs, were all that told me he was alive. I spoke to him, but he would not hear me; and when I persisted, he raised his hand at me, and knit his brow so——I thought he would have struck me.

Mrs. Bev. Oh, miserable! but what said he, Jarvis? Or was he silent all night?

Jar. At day-break he started from the bed, and looking wildly at me, asked who I was. I told him, and bid him be of comfort——Begone, old wretch, says he——I have sworn never to know comfort.—My wife! my child! my sister! I have undone them all, and will know no comfort. Then falling upon his knees, he imprecated curses upon himself.

Mrs. Bev. This is too horrible!——But you did not leave him so?

Char. No, I am sure he did not.

Jar. I had not the heart, madam. By degrees I brought him to himself. A shower of tears came to his relief; and he called me his kindest friend, and begged forgiveness of me like a child.——My heart throbbed so, I could not speak to him. He turned from me for a minute or two, and suppressing a few bitter sighs, enquired after his wretched family.—— "Wretched was his word, madam—Asked how you "bore the misery of last night—If you had the good- "ness to see him in prison: and then begged me to "hasten to you. I told him he must be more himself "first—He promised me he would; and bating a few "sudden intervals, he became composed and easy— "And then I left him; but not without an attendant "—a servant in the prison whom I hired to wait "upon him—'Tis an hour since we parted——I was "prevented in my haste to be the messenger of joy "to you."

Mrs. Bev. What a tale is this?—But we have staid too long——" A coach is needless.

" *Char.* Hark! I hear one at the door."

Jar. " And Lucy comes to tell us"——We'll away this moment.

Mrs. Bev. To comfort him, or die with him. [*Ex.*

" *SCENE III.*

" *Changes to* STUKELY's *Lodgings.* *Enter* STUKELY, " BATES, *and* DAWSON.

" *Stuke.* Here's presumptive evidence at least—or " if we want more, why we must swear more. But " all unwillingly—We gain credit by reluctance—I " have told you how to proceed. Beverley must die " ——We hunt him in view now, and must not " slacken in the chace. 'Tis either death for him, or " shame and punishment for us. Think of that, and " remember your instructions—You, Bates, must to " the prison immediately. I would be there but a " few minutes before you; and you, Dawson, must " follow in a few minutes after. So here we divide " ——But answer me; are you resolved upon this " business like men?

" *Bates.* Like villains rather—But you may depend " upon us.

" *Stuke.* Like what we are then—You make no an- " swer, Dawson—Compassion, I suppose, has seized " you.

" *Daw.* No; I have disclaimed it——My answer " is Bates's——You may depend upon me.

" *Stuke.* Consider the reward! Riches and secu- " rity! I have sworn to divide with you to the last " shilling——So here we separate till we meet in pri- " son——Remember your instructions, and be men.

" [*Exeunt.*"

SCENE IV.

Changes to a Prison. BEVERLEY *is discovered sitting. After a short pause, he starts up, and comes forward.*

Bev. Why, there's an end then, I have judged deliberately, and the result is death. How the self-murderer's account may stand, I know not. But this I know—the load of hateful life oppresses me too much—The horrors of my soul are more than I can bear—[*Offers to kneel.*] Father of mercy!——I cannot pray——Despair has laid his iron hand upon me, and sealed me for perdition——Conscience! Conscience! thy clamours are too loud——Here's that shall silence thee. [*Takes a phial out of his pocket, and looks at it.*] Thou art most friendly to the miserable. Come then, thou cordial for sick minds——Come to my heart. [*Drinks.*] Oh, that the grave would bury memory as well as body! For if the soul sees and feels the sufferings of those dear ones it leaves behind, the Everlasting has no vengeance to torment it deeper—I'll think no more on't—Reflection comes too late—

Once there was a time for't—but now 'tis past.—— Who's there?

Enter JARVIS.

Jar. One that hoped to see you with better looks—Why d'you turn so from me? I have brought comfort with me. And see who comes to give it welcome.

Bev. My wife and sister! Why, 'tis but one pang more then, and farewell world. [*Aside.*

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. Where is he? [*Runs and embraces him.*] Oh, I have him! I have him! And now they shall never part us more—I have news, love, to make you happy for ever——" But don't look coldly on me.

" *Char.* How is it, brother?

" *Mrs. Bev.*" Alas! he hears us not——Speak to me, love. I have no heart to see you thus.

Bev. " Nor I to bear the sense of so much shame" —This is a sad place!

Mrs. Bev. We came to take you from it. To tell you the world goes well again. That Providence has seen our sorrows, and sent the means to help them—Your uncle died yesterday.

Bev. My uncle!—No, do not say so!—Oh, I am sick at heart!

Mrs. Bev. Indeed!—I meant to bring you comfort.

Bev. Tell me he lives then——If you would bring me comfort, tell me he lives.

Mrs. Bev. And if I did—I have no power to raise the dead——He died yesterday.

Bev. And I am heir to him?

Jar. To his whole estate, sir——But bear it patiently—pray bear it patiently.

Bev. Well, well—[*Pausing.*] Why, fame says I am rich then?

Mrs. Bev. And truly so——Why do you look so wildly?

Bev. Do I? The news was unexpected. But has he left me all?

Jar. All, all, sir—He could not leave it from you.

Bev. I am sorry for it.

"*Char.* Sorry! Why sorry?

"*Bev.* Your uncle's dead, Charlotte.

"*Char.* Peace be with his soul then—Is it so ter-
"rible that an old man should die?

"*Bev.* He should have been immortal."

Mrs. Bev. "Heaven knows I wished not for his
"death. 'Twas the will of Providence that he should
"die"——Why are you disturbed so?

Bev. Has death no terrors in it?

Mrs. Bev. Not an old man's death. Yet if it troubles you, I wish him living.

Bev. And I, with all my heart.

"*Char.* Why, what's the matter?

"*Bev.* Nothing—How heard you of his death?

"*Mrs. Bev.* His steward came express. Would I
"had never known it!"

Bev. "Or had heard it one day sooner"——For I

have a tale to tell, shall turn you into stone; or, if the power of speech remain, you shall kneel down and curse me.

Mrs. Bev. Alas! what tale is this? And why are we to curse you—I'll bless you for ever.

Bev. No; I have deserved no blessings. The world holds not such another wretch. All this large fortune, this second bounty of Heaven, that might have healed our sorrows, and satisfied our utmost hopes, in a cursed hour I sold last night.

Char. Sold! How sold?

Mrs. Bev. Impossible!—It cannot be!

Bev. That devil Stukely, with all hell to aid him, tempted me to the deed. To pay false debts of honour, and to redeem past errors, I sold the reversion ——Sold it for a scanty sum, and lost it among villains.

Char. Why, farewell all then.

Bev. Liberty and life—Come, kneel and curse me.

Mrs. Bev. Then hear me, Heaven! [*Kneels.*] Look down with mercy on his sorrows! Give softness to his looks, and quiet to his heart! Take from his memory the sense of what is past, and cure him of despair! On me! on me! if misery must be the lot of either, multiply misfortunes! I'll bear them patiently, so he is happy! These hands shall toil for his support! These eyes be lifted up for hourly blessings on him! And every duty of a fond and faithful wife be doubly done to cheer and comfort him!—So hear me! So reward me! [*Rises.*

Bev. I would kneel too, but that offended Heaven would turn my prayers into curses. "What have I "to ask for! I, who have shook hands with hope? "Is it for length of days that I should kneel? No; "my time is limited. Or is it for this world's bles- "sings upon you and yours? To pour out my heart "in wishes for a ruined wife, a child, and sister? "Oh, no!" for I have done a deed to make life hor- rible to you——

"*Mrs. Bev.* Why horrible? Is poverty so hor- "rible?—The real wants of life are few. A little "industry will supply them all—And cheerfulness "will follow—It is the privilege of honest industry, "and we'll enjoy it fully.

"*Bev.* Never, never—Oh, I have told you but in "part. The irrevocable deed is done."

Mrs. Bev. What deed?—"And why do you look "so at me?

"*Bev.* A deed that dooms my soul to vengeance— "That seals your misery here, and mine hereafter.

"*Mrs. Bev.* No, no; you have a heart too good "for't—Alas! he raves, Charlotte—His looks too "terrify me—Speak comfort to him—He can have "done no deed of wickedness.

"*Char.* And yet I fear the worst——What is it, "brother?"

Bev. A deed of horror.

Jar. Ask him no questions, madam—This last mis- fortune has hurt his brain. A little time will give him patience.

Enter STUKELY.

Bev. Why is this villain here?

Stuke. To give you liberty and safety. There, madam's, his discharge. [*Giving a paper to Mrs.* Beverley.] Let him fly this moment. The arrest last night was meant in friendship; but came too late.

Char. What mean you, sir?

Stuke. The arrest was too late, I say; I would have kept his hands from blood, but was too late.

Mrs. Bev. His hands from blood!—Whose blood?—Oh, wretch! wretch!

Stuke. From Lewson's blood.

Char. No, villain! Yet what of Lewson? Speak quickly.

Stuke. You are ignorant then! I thought I heard the murderer at confession.

Char. What murderer?—And who is murdered? Not Lewson?—Say he lives, and I'll kneel and worship you.

Stuke. In pity, so I would; but that the tongues of all cry murder. I came in pity, not in malice; to save the brother, not kill the sister. Your Lewson's dead.

Char. O horrible! "Why who has killed him? "And yet it cannot be. What crime had he com- "mitted that he should die? Villain! he lives! he "lives! and shall revenge these pangs.

"*Mrs. Bev.* Patience, sweet Charlotte!

"*Char.* O, 'tis too much for patience!

" *Mrs. Bev.* He comes in pity, he says! O, ex-
" ecrable villain! The friend is killed then, and this
" the murderer?"

Bev. Silence, I charge you.——Proceed, sir.

Stuke. No. Justice may stop the tale—and here's an evidence.

Enter BATES.

Bates. The news, I see, has reached you. But take comfort, madam. [*To* Char.] There's one without enquiring for you.—Go to him, and lose no time.

Char. O misery! misery! [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bev. Follow her, Jarvis. If it be true that Lewson's dead, her grief may kill her.

Bates. Jarvis must stay here, madam. I have some questions for him.

Stuke. Rather let him fly. His evidence may crush his master.

Bev. Why ay; this looks like management.

Bates. He found you quarrelling with Lewson in the streets last night. [*To* Bev.

Mrs. Bev. No; I am sure he did not.

Jar. Or if I did———

Mrs. Bev. 'Tis false, old man—They had no quarrel; there was no cause for quarrel.

Bev. Let him proceed, I say——Oh! I am sick! sick!———Reach a chair. [*He sits down.*

Mrs. Bev. You droop and tremble, love.——Your eyes are fixed too———Yet you are innocent. If Lewson's dead, you killed him not.

Enter DAWSON.

Stuke. Who sent for Dawson?

Bates. 'Twas I——We have a witness too you little think of—— Without there!

Stuke. What witness?

Bates. A right one. Look at him.

Enter LEWSON *and* CHARLOTTE.

Stuke. Lewson! O villains! villains!

[*To* Bates *and* Dawson.

Mrs. Bev. Risen from the dead! Why, this is unexpected happiness!

Char. Or is't his ghost? [*To* Stukely.] That sight would please you, sir.

Jar. What riddle's this?

Bev. Be quick and tell it——My minutes are but few.

Mrs. Bev. Alas! why so? You shall live long and happily.

Lew. While shame and punishment shall rack that viper. [*Pointing to* Stukely.] The tale is short—I was too busy in his secrets, and therefore doomed to die. Bates, to prevent the murder, undertook it—I kept aloof to give it credit.———

Char. And give me pangs unutterable.

Lew. I felt 'em all, and would have told you——But vengeance wanted ripening. The villain's scheme was but half executed. The arrest by Dawson followed the supposed murder——And now, depending

on his once wicked associates, he comes to fix the guilt on Beverley.

Mrs. Bev. O! execrable wretch!

Bates. Dawson and I are witnesses of this.

Lew. And of a thousand frauds. His fortune ruined by sharpers and false dice; and Stukely sole contriver and possessor of all.

Daw. Had he but stopped on this side murder, we had been villains still.

Mrs. Bev. Thus Heaven turns evil into good: and by permitting sin, warns men to virtue.

Lew. Yet punishes the instrument. So shall our laws; tho' not with death. But death were mercy. Shame, beggary, and imprisonment, unpitied misery, the stings of conscience, and the curses of mankind shall make life hateful to him—till at last his own hand end him—How does my friend? [*To* Bev.

Bev. Why well. Who's he that asks me?

Mrs. Bev. 'Tis Lewson, love——Why do you look so at him?

Bev. They told me he was murdered. [*Wildly.*

Mrs. Bev. Ay; but he lives to save us.

Bev. Lend me your hand—The room turns round.

Mrs. Bev. O Heaven!

Lew. This villain here disturbs him. Remove him from his sight——And for your lives see that you guard him. [Stukely *is taken off by* Dawson *and* Bates.] How is it, sir?

Bev. 'Tis here——and here. [*Pointing to his head and heart.*] And now it tears me!

Mrs. Bev. You feel convulsed too——What is't disturbs you?

" *Lew.* This sudden turn of joy, perhaps——He " wants rest too——Last night was dreadful to him. " His brain is giddy.

" *Char.* Ay, never to be cured——Why, brother! " —O! I fear! I fear!

" *Mrs. Bev.* Preserve him, Heaven!"—My love! my life! look at me!——How his eyes flame!

Bev. A furnace rages in this heart——" I have " been too hasty.

" *Mrs. Bev.* Indeed!——O me! O me!——Help, " Jarvis! Fly, fly for help! Your master dies else. " —Weep not, but fly! [*Exit* Jarvis.] What is this " hasty deed?—Yet do not answer me——My fears " have guessed.

" *Bev.* Call back the messenger——'Tis not in me- " dicine's power to help me.

" *Mrs. Bev.* Is it then so?

" *Bev.*" Down, restless flames!——[*Laying his hand on his heart.*] down to your native hell—— There you shall rack me—O! for a pause from pain!

" *Mrs. Bev.* Help, Charlotte! Support him, sir! " [*To* Lewson.] This is a killing sight!

" *Bev.* That pang was well—It has numbed my " senses."——Where's my wife?——Can you for- give me, love?

Mrs. Bev. Alas! for what?

" *Bev.* [*Starting again.*] And there's another pang " ——Now all is quiet—Will you forgive me?

" *Mrs. Bev.* I will———tell me for what?"

Bev. For meanly dying.

Mrs. Bev. No———do not say it.

Bev. As truly as my soul must answer it.——Had Jarvis staid this morning, all had been well. But pressed by shame—pent in a prison—tormented with my pangs for you—driven to despair and madness—I took the advantage of his absence, corrupted the poor wretch he left to guard me, and—swallowed poison.

Mrs. Bev. O fatal deed!

Char. Dreadful and cruel!

Bev. Ay, most accursed—And now I go to my account. " This rest from pain brings death; yet 'tis " Heaven's kindness to me. I wished for ease, a mo- " ment's ease, that cool repentance and contrition " might soften vengeance."——Bend me, and let me kneel. [*They lift him from his chair, and support him on his knees.*] I'll pray for you too. Thou Power that madest me, hear me! If for a life of frailty, and this too hasty deed of death, thy justice dooms me, here I acquit the sentence. But if enthroned in mercy where thou sittest, thy pity has beheld me, send me a gleam of hope; that in these last and bitter moments my soul may taste of comfort! and for these mourners here, O! let their lives be peaceful, and their deaths happy!——" Now raise me."

[*They lift him to the chair.*

Mrs. Bev. Restore him, Heaven! Stretch forth thy arm omnipotent, and snatch him from the grave!—O save him! save him! *or let me die too.*

" *Bev.* Alas! that prayer is fruitless. Already " death has seized me—Yet Heaven is gracious——I " asked for hope, as the bright presage of forgiveness, " and like a light, blazing through darkness, it came " and cheered me—'Twas all I lived for," and now I die.

" *Mrs. Bev.* Not yet!—Not yet!—Stay but a little " and I'll die too."

Bev. No; live, I charge you.—We have a little one. —Tho' I have left him, you will not leave him.—To Lewson's kindness I bequeath him.—Is not this Charlotte?—We have lived in love, tho' I have wronged you.——Can you forgive me, Charlotte?

Char. Forgive you! O my poor brother!

Bev. " Lend me your hand, love——So—raise me " ——No——'twill not be——My life is finished—" O! for a few short moments, to tell you how my heart bleeds for you—That even now, thus dying as I am, dubious and fearful of hereafter, my bosom pang is for your miseries, support her, Heaven!—And now I go ——O, mercy! mercy! [*Dies.*

Lew. Then all is over——How is it, madam?—— My poor Charlotte too!

Enter JARVIS.

" *Jar.* How does my master, madam? Here's help " at hand——Am I too late then? [*Seeing* Bev.

" *Char.* Tears! tears! why fall you not————O " wretched sister!————Speak to her, Lewson——' Her grief is speechless.

Lew. "Remove her from this sight—Go to her, "Jarvis—Lead and support her." Sorrow like hers forbids complaint——Words are for lighter griefs—Some ministering angel bring her peace! [Jar. *and* Char. *lead her off.*] And thou, poor breathless corpse, may thy departed soul have found the rest it prayed for! Save but one error, and this last fatal deed, thy life was lovely. Let frailer minds take warning; and from example learn, that want of prudence is want of virtue.

Follies, if uncontroul'd, of every kind,
Grow into passions, and subdue the mind;
With sense and reason hold superior strife,
And conquer honour, nature, fame and life,

[Exeunt omnes.

EPILOGUE.

Written by a Friend.

ON every gamester in th' Arabian nation,
'Tis said that Mahomet denounc'd damnation:
But in return for wicked cards and dice,
He gave 'em black ey'd girls in Paradise.
Should he thus preach, good countrymen, to you,
His converts would, I fear, be mighty few,
So much your hearts are set on sordid gain,
The brightest eyes around you shine in vain.
Should the most Heavenly beauty bid you take her,
You'd rather hold——two aces and a maker.
By your example, our poor sex drawn in,
Is guilty of the same unnat'ral sin;
The study now of ev'ry girl of parts,
Is how to win your money, not your hearts.
O! in what sweet, what ravishing delights
Our beaux and belles together pass their nights!
By ardent perturbations kept awake,
Each views with longing eyes the other's—stake.
The smiles and graces are from Britain flown,
Our Cupid is an errant sharper grown,
And Fortune sits on Cytherea's throne.
In all these things, tho' women may be blam'd,
Sure men, the wiser men, should be asham'd!

And 'tis a horrid scandal, I declare,
That four strange queens should rival all the fair;
Four jilts with neither beauty, wit, nor parts,
O shame! have got possession of their hearts:
And those bold sluts, for all their queenly pride,
Have play'd loose tricks, or else they're much bely'd.
Cards were at first for benefits design'd,
Sent to amuse, and not enslave the mind.
From good to bad how easy the transition!
For what was pleasure once, is now perdition.
Fair ladies, then, these wicked gamesters shun,
Whoever weds one, is, you see, undone.

THE END.

THE EARL OF WARWICK.

A

TRAGEDY,

BY DR. FRANKLIN.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

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MDCCXCII.

THE EARL OF WARWICK.

THE present play is a translation by Dr. FRANKLIN the *Grecian*, from a tragedy written in French by M. DE LA HARPE. Paul Hiffernan, in the same year, 1767, also published a translation——We have not compared their productions.

It will be visible that the manners are not those of the period when the action passes, and that the whole play is in the *verbose* style.——The contest of insult between EDWARD and WARWICK is in great request among our juvenile declaimers.

The excellence of Mrs. YATES in *Franklin's* play secured its success——it is now, however, seldom played, sharing the fate of all French literal translations.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.

Spoken by Mr. BENSLEY.

SEVERE each poet's lot; but sure most hard
Is the condition of the play-house bard:
Doom'd to hear all that wou'd-be critics talk,
And in the go-cart of dull rules to walk!
'Yet authors multiply,' you say. 'Tis true,
But what a numerous crop of critics too!
Scholars alone of old durst judge and write;
But now each journalist turns stagyrite.
Quintalians in each coffee-house you meet,
And many a Longinus walks the street.

In Shakspere's days, when his advent'rous muse,
A muse of fire! durst each bold licence use,
Her noble ardor met no critic's phlegm,
To check wild fancy, or her flights condemn:
Ariels and Calibans, unblam'd she drew,
Or goblins, ghosts, and witches, brought to view.
If to historic truth she shap'd her verse,
A nation's annals freely she'd rehearse;
Bring Rome's or England's story on the stage,
And run, in three short hours, through half an age.

Our bard, all terror-struck, and fill'd with dread,
In Shakspere's awful footsteps dares not tread;
Through the wide field of hist'ry fears to stray,
And builds upon one narrow spot his play;
Steps not from realm to realm, whole seas between,
But barely changes twice or thrice his scene:
While Shakspere vaults on the poetic wire,
And pleas'd spectators fearfully admire,
Our bard, a critic pole between his hands,
On the tight-rope, scarce balanc'd, trembling stands;
Slowly and cautiously his way he makes,
And fears to fall at every step he takes:
While then fierce Warwick he before you brings,
That setter-up and puller-down of kings,
With British candour dissipate his fear!
An English story fits an English ear.
Though harse and crude you deem his first essay,
A second may your favours well repay:
Applause may nerve his verse, and cheer his heart,
And teach the practice of this dangerous art.

Dramatis Personæ.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

King EDWARD, - - - - - - Mr. Palmer.
Earl of WARWICK, - - - - - - Mr. Smith.
Earl of PEMBROKE, - - - - - - Mr. Aickin.
Earl of SUFFOLK, - - - - - - - Mr. Packer.

Women.

MARGARET of ANJOU, - - - - - Mrs. Siddons.
Lady ELIZABETH GRAY, - - - - - Miss Kemble.
Lady CLIFFORD, - - - - - - Miss Tidswell.

Officers, Attendants, Guards, &c.

SCENE, *The Palace.*

THE EARL OF WARWICK.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Palace. Enter MARGARET *of* ANJOU, *and Lady* CLIFFORD.

Lady Clifford.

THANKS! gracious Heav'n, my royal mistress smiles,
Unusual gladness sparkles in her eye,
And bids me welcome in the stranger joy
To his new mansion.

Marg. Yes, my faithful Clifford,
Fortune is weary of oppressing me:
Thro' my dark cloud of grief, a cheerful ray
Of light breaks forth, and gilds the whole horizon.

Cliff. Henry in chains, and Edward on the throne
Of Lancaster, thyself a pris'ner here,
Thy captive son torn from his mother's arms,
And in the tyrant's power; a kingdom lost:
Amidst so many sorrows, what new hope
Hath wrought this wondrous change?

Marg. That which alone,
In sorrow's bitt'rest hour, can minister
Sweet comfort to the daughters of affliction,
And bid misfortune smile, the hope of vengeance:
Vengeance, benignant patron of distress,
Thee I have oft invoked, propitious now
Thou smil'st upon me, if I do not grasp
The glorious opportunity, henceforth
Indignant frown, and leave me to my fate!

Cliff. Unhappy princess! that deceiver hope
Hath often flatter'd, and as oft betray'd thee:
What hast thou gain'd by all its promises?
What's the reward of all thy toils?

Marg. Experience——
Yes, Clifford, I have read th' instructive volume
Of human nature, there long since have learn'd
The way to conquer men is by their passions;
Catch but the ruling foible of their hearts,
And all their boasted virtues shrink before you.
Edward and Warwick, those detested names,
Too well thou know'st, united to destroy me.

Cliff. That was indeed a fatal league.

Marg. But mark me;
If we could break this adamantine chain,
We might again be free: this mighty warrior,
This dread of kings, th' unconquerable Warwick,
Is plighted to the fair Elizabeth.

Cliff. The Lady Gray, you mean, the beauteous widow,
Whose husband fell in arms for Lancaster.

Marg. The same, my Clifford—Warwick long has lov'd——

Cliff. And means to wed her.

Marg. But if I have art,
Or she ambition, that shall never be.

Cliff. Canst thou prevent it?

Marg. Yes, my Clifford, Warwick
Were a mean choice for such transcendent beauty;
I shall provide her with a fitter husband,
A nobler far, and worthier of her charms—
Young Edward———

Cliff. Ha! the king! impossible!
Warwick, ev'n now, commission'd by the state,
To treat with Lewis, offers England's throne
To France's daughter, and e'er this, perhaps,
Hath sign'd the solemn contract.

Marg. Solemn trifles!
Mere cobweb ties—Love's a despotic tyrant,
And laughs, like other kings, at public faith,
When it opposes private happiness:
Edward is youthful, gay, and amorous;
His soul is ever open to the lure
Of beauty, and Elizabeth hath charms
Might shake a hermit's virtue.

Cliff. Hath he seen
This peerless fair one?

Marg. Yes—by my contrivance,
When last he hunted in the forest, some,
Whom I had planted there, as if by chance
Alone directed, led him cross the lawn

To Grafton, there—ev'n as my soul had wish'd,
The dazzling lustre of her charms surpris'd
His unsuspecting heart——

Cliff. What follow'd?

Marg. O!
He gaz'd and wonder'd; for awhile his pride
Indignant rose, and struggled with his passion,
But love was soon victorious: and last night,
The Earl of Suffolk, so my trusty spies
Inform me, was dispatch'd on wings of love,
To plead his master's cause, and offer her
The throne of England.

Cliff. What if she refuse
The golden bribe?

Marg. No matter; all I wish
Is but to make them foes; the gen'rous Warwick
Is fiery, and impatient of reproof,
He will not brook a rival in his love,
Tho' seated on a throne; besides, thou know'st,
The haughty earl looks down with scorn on Edward,
As the mere work of his all-powerful hand,
The baby monarch of his own creation.

Cliff. Believe me, madam, Edward still reveres
And loves him, still as conscious of the debt,
Pays him with trust and confidence; their souls
Are link'd together in the strictest bonds
Of sacred friendship.

Marg. That but serves my cause:
Where ties are close, and interests united,
The slightest inj'ries are severely felt;
Offended friendship never can forgive.

Cliff. Now the full prospect opens to my view,
I see thy distant aim, and trace the paths
Of vengeance: England soon will be a scene
Of blood and horror, discord's fatal torch
Once lit up in this devoted land,
What pow'r shall e'er extinguish it? Alas!
I tremble at the consequence.

Marg. And I
Enjoy it:—O! 'twill be a noble contest
Of pride 'gainst pride, oppression 'gainst oppression;
Rise but the storm, and let the waves beat high,
The wreck may be our own: in the warm struggle,
Who knows but one or both of them may fall,
And Marg'ret rise triumphant on their ruin!
It must be so; and see, the king approaches:
This way he passes from the council—Mark
His down-cast eye, he is a stricken deer,
The arrow's in his side—he cannot 'scape:
We'll meet and speak to him.

Cliff. What mean you, madam?

Marg. To ask him—what, I know, he will refuse;
That gives me fair pretext to break with him,
And join the man I hate, vindictive Warwick;
But soft, he comes———

SCENE II.

Enter King EDWARD, *and an Officer.*

Edw. Is Suffolk yet return'd? [*To an Officer.*

Offi. No, my good liege.

Edw. Go, wait and bring him to me. [*Exit Offi.*
I'll to my closet. Pardon me, fair lady,
I saw you not.

Marg. Perhaps it is beneath
A conqu'ror to look down upon his slave;
But I've a boon to ask.

Edw. Whate'er it is,
Within the limits of fair courtesy,
Which honour can bestow, I'll not refuse thee.

Marg. There was a time when Margaret of Anjou
Would not have deign'd to ask of Edward aught;
Nor was there aught which Edward dar'd refuse her;
But that is past, great Warwick's arm prevail'd,
And I am now your pris'ner.

Edw. Since the hour,
When fortune smil'd propitious on the cause
Of justice, and gave vict'ry to our arms,
You have been treated with all due respect,
All your condition, or your sex could claim;
Serv'd like a queen, and lodg'd within our palace:
Is there aught more you can with reason ask,
Or I in prudence grant you?

Marg. Give me back
The liberty I lost—restore my son,
And I may then, perhaps, be reconcil'd
To an usurper, may with-hold my vengeance,
And let thee sit unpunish'd on—my throne.

Edw. You talk too proudly, madam; but to shew you
I cannot fear, you have your liberty.

Letters this morning I receiv'd from France,
Have offer'd noble ransom for your person;
Without that ransom—for the soul of Edward
Is far above the sordid lust of gold,
I grant it—from this moment you are free;
But for your son—I cannot part with him.

Marg. I scorn your bounties, scorn your proffer'd freedom,
What's liberty to me without my child?
But fate will place us soon above thy reach,
Thy short-liv'd tyranny is almost past,
The storm is gath'ring round thee, and will burst
With ten-fold vengeance on thy guilty head.

Edw. I am not to be talk'd into submission,
Nor dread the menace of a clam'rous woman.

Marg. Thou may'st have cause to dread a woman's pow'r.
The time may come—mark my prophetic word—
When wayward beauty shall repay with scorn
Thy fruitless vows, and vindicate my wrongs:
The friend thou lean'st on, like a broken reed,
Shall pierce thy side, and fill thy soul with anguish,
Keen as the pangs I feel: York's perjur'd house
Shall sink to rise no more, and Lancaster
With added lustre re-assume the throne.
Hear this and tremble—give me back my son—
Or dread the vengeance of a desp'rate mother.

[*Exit* Margaret.

SCENE III.

Edw. Imperious woman! but the voice of wo
Is ever clam'rous: 'tis the privilege,
The charter of affliction to complain.——
This tardy Suffolk! how I long to know,
Yet dread to hear my fate! Elizabeth,
On thee the colour of my future life
Depends, for thou alone canst make me blest,
Or curs'd for ever!—O! this cruel doubt
Is worse than all my tortures: but he comes,
Th' ambassador of love.

SCENE IV.

Enter the Earl of SUFFOLK.

Edw. What news, my Suffolk!
Shall I be happy? O! I'm on the rack
Of expectation, didst thou tell my tale
As if it were thy own, and may I hope—
Suff. My royal liege——
Edw. Good Suffolk, lay aside
The forms of dull respect, be brief, and tell me,
Speak, hast thou seen her? Will she be my queen?
Quick, tell me ev'ry circumstance, each word,
Each look, each gesture: didst thou mark them, Suffolk?
Suff. I did, and will recount it all; last night

By your command, in secret I repair'd
To Grafton's tufted bow'r, the happy seat
Of innocence and beauty, there I found
Thy soul's best hope, the fair Elizabeth;
Ne'er did these eyes behold such sweet perfection:
I found her busy'd in the pious office
Of filial duty, tending her sick father.

Edw. That was a lucky moment, to prefer
My humble suit: touch but the tender string
Of soft compassion in the heart, and love
Will quickly vibrate to its kindred passion;
You urg'd our royal purpose, then?

Suff. I did,
With all the warmth of friendship, dwelt with pleasure
On ev'ry princely virtue that adorns
Your noble heart; she listen'd with attention,
And echo'd back your praises.

Edw. Was not that
A kind propitious omen?

Suff. Such indeed
Hoping to find it, I call'd in the pow'rs
Of flattery to my aid, and gaz'd upon her,
As if confounded by her dazzling beauties—
Conscious she smil'd; but when, at length, I spake
Of England's monarch sighing at her feet—
The crimson glow of modesty o'erspread
Her cheek, and gave new lustre to her charms:
She turn'd aside, and as she silently bow'd
Her doubtful thanks, I mark'd the pearly tear
Steal down its secret track, and from her breast

Heard a deep sigh, she struggled to conceal;
If I have any judgment, or can trace
The hidden feelings of a woman's heart,
Her's is already fix'd: I fear, my liege,
With all that England, all that thou could'st give,
The crown would sit but heavy on her brow.

Edw. Not heavier, Suffolk, than it sits on mine:
My throne is irksome to me; who would wish
To be a sov'reign, when Elizabeth
Prefers a subject?—Then th' impetuous Warwick,
His awful virtue will chastise my weakness.
I dread his censure, dread his keen reproaches,
And dread them more because they will be just.
I've promis'd Lewis to espouse his daughter,
To strengthen our alliance: would to heaven
I had not! if I seek this coy refuser,
And break with France, Warwick will take th' alarm;
If once offended, he's inexorable.

Suff. I know him well—Believe me, sir, the high
And haughty spirit, when it meets rebuke,
Is easiest check'd, and sinks into submission.
Let him, my liege, who ventures to arraign
His master's conduct, look into his own:
There ever is a corner in the heart
Open to folly; Warwick is not free
From human frailties.

Edw. No: ambition fires
His noble breast, love triumphs over mine;
But well thou know'st, our eyes are ever open
To other's faults, and shut against our own.

We seldom pity woes we ne'er experienc'd,
Or pardon weakness which we do not feel:
He is a hero.

Suff. Heroes are but men;
I have some cause to think so—but of that
We'll talk another time: mean while, my liege,
I think Lord Warwick is a useful friend.

Edw. Aye, and a dangerous foe; the people love,
To adoration love him; if he falls
From his allegiance, crowds will follow him.
England has long been rent by civil broils,
And fain would rest her in the arms of peace;
Her wounds scarce clos'd, shall Edward open them,
And bid them bleed afresh? believe me, Suffolk,
I would not be the cause of new divisions
Amongst my people, for a thousand kingdoms.

Suff. 'Tis nobly said, and may thy grateful subjects,
Revere thy virtues, and reward thy love!

Edw. O! Suffolk, did they know but half the cares
That wait on royalty, they would not grudge
Their wretched master a few private hours
Of social happiness.—If France consents,
I am undone; and Warwick hath ere this
Enslav'd me: curse on this state policy,
That binds us thus to love at second hand!
Who knows but he may link me to a wretch;
Wed me to folly, ignorance, and pride,
Ill-nature, sickness, or deformity;
And when I'm chain'd to mis'ry, coldly tell me,
To sooth my grief, 'twas for the public good.

Suff. How far you have commission'd him, I know not,
But were I worthy to advise, my liege,
I would not be the dupe of his ambition,
But follow nature's dictates, and be happy.
England has charms besides Elizabeth's,
And beauties that——

Edw. No more; my heart is fix'd
On her alone; find out this pow'rful rival,
I charge thee, Suffolk: yet why wish to find,
What found will make me wretched? were he bound
In cords of tend'rest friendship round my heart,
Dearer than Warwick, dearer than thyself,
Forgive me, but I fear I should abhor him.
O think on something that may yet be done,
To win her to my heart ere Warwick comes.

Suff. I hear he is expected every hour.

Edw. Grant heav'n some friendly storm may yet retard him.
I dread his presence here.

SCENE IV.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My liege, the Earl
Of Warwick is arriv'd.

Edw. Ha! when? how? where?
Would he were bury'd in the rapid waves
That brought him hither! comes he here to night?

Mess. My liege, ere now he might have reach'd the palace,
But that the shouting multitudes press hard
On ev'ry side, and seem to worship him. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

SUFFOLK, *and* EDWARD.

Suff. Such adoration
But ill befits the idol that receives it.

Edw. What's to be done? I cannot, must not see him,
Till all is fix'd: once more, my best-lov'd Suffolk,
Try the soft arts of thy persuasive tongue:
What method canst thou think on, to evade
This promis'd marriage with ambitious France?

Suff. Summon your council, lay your thoughts before them,
Meet Warwick there, and urge a sov'reign's right,
To please himself in that which should concern
Himself alone—firm Buckingham and I
Will plead your cause against the haughty Warwick,
Whom I would treat with cold civility,
And distant state, which ever angers more
Resentful spirits than the warmth of passion.

Edw. 'Tis well advis'd:—mean time, if possible,
I will compose my troubled thoughts to rest:
Suffolk, adieu: if Warwick asks for me,
I am not well—I'm hunting in the forest—

I'm busy—stay—remember what I told you,
Touching the earldom which I mean to give
Her father; that may bring her to the court;
You understand me, Suffolk—fare thee well.

SCENE VI.

Edw. Why should I dread to see the man I love—
The man I rev'rence—Warwick is not chang'd,
But Edward is—Suffolk, I know, abhors him—
A fav'rite must be hated—if he urges
This dreadful contract, I shall hate him too:
I cannot live without Elizabeth:
I'll think no more— if I must sacrifice
My friendship or my love—the choice is made.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter WARWICK, *speaking to an Officer.*

Warwick.

'Tis well: I shall attend his highness' pleasure.
[*Comes forward.*
Meet me i' th' council! Warwick might have claim'd
A private audience—After all my toils,
My perils in his service, 'tis a cold
Unkind reception: some base whisperer,
Some needy sycophant, perhaps, hath poison'd
My royal master's ear—or, do I judge
Too rashly? As my embassy concerns

The public welfare, he would honour me
With public thanks—Elizabeth will chide me
For this unkind delay—but honour calls,
And duty to my king: that task perform'd,
I haste, my love, to happiness and thee. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Council-Chamber. *King* EDWARD, *Dukes of* CLARENCE *and* BUCKINGHAM, *Earls of* SUFFOLK, PEMBROKE, *&c.*

Edw. Good Buckingham, I thank thee for thy counsel,
Nor blame thy honest warmth; I love this freedom,
It is the birth-right of an Englishman,
And doth become thee: what says noble Suffolk?

Suff. I would not cross my royal master's will;
But, on my soul, I think, this nuptial league
With France prepost'rous and impolitic!
It cannot last; we are by nature foes,
And nought but mutual poverty and weakness
Can ever make us friends—she wants our aid
Against the pow'rful Burgundy, and therefore
Throws out this lure of beauty to ensnare you,
That purpose gain'd, she turns her arms against us.

Pemb. Why, let her: if she comes with hostile arm,
England, thank Heav'n, is ready to receive her:
I love my country, and revere my king,
As much perhaps as honest Buckingham,

Or my good fearful lord of Suffolk here,
Who knows so well, or would be thought to know,
What France will do hereafter: yet I think,
The faith of nations is a thing so sacred,
It ought not to be trifled with—I hate
As much as you th' unnatural forc'd alliance,
And yet, my lords, if Warwick is empow'r'd,
For so I hear he is, to treat with Lewis,
I know not how in honour you can swerve
From his conditions. [*Shouting.*
Hark! the hero comes:
Those shouts proclaim him near: the joyful people
Will usher in their great deliverer
As he deserves.

SCENE III.

Enter WARWICK.

Edw. Thrice welcome, noble Warwick,
Welcome to all! [*To* Clarence, Pembroke, *&c.*
Suff. You've had, my lord, I fear,
An arduous task, which few could execute.
But Warwick, in the council and the field,
Alike distinguish'd, and alike successful.
Edw. What says our cousin France?
Warw. By me, my liege,
He greets you well, and hopes in closer ties
United soon to wear a dearer name.
At length, thank Heav'n! the iron gates of war

Are clos'd, and peace displays her silken banners
O'er the contending nations, ev'ry doubt
Is now remov'd, and confidence establish'd,
I hope, to last for ages.

Edw. Peace, my lord,
Is ever welcome; 'tis the gift of Heav'n,
The nurse of science, art's fair patroness,
And merit's best protector; but if France
Would chain us down to ignominious terms,
Cramp our free commerce, and infringe the rights
Of our liege subjects, England may repent
Too late her rash credulity, and peace
With all her blessings may be bought too dear.

Warw. The shame would then be his, who made the purchase.
If any doubt my faith, my honest zeal
For thee and for my country, let him speak,
And I will answer: punish me, just Heav'n,
If in the task I have consulted aught
But England's honour, and my sov'reign's glory!

Edw. Mistake me not, good Warwick, well I know
Thy spotless truth, thy honour, and thy love;
But glory has no farther charms for me:
Rais'd by thy pow'rful aid to England's throne,
I ask no more: already I am great
As fame and fortune with their smiles can make me,
And all I wish for now is—to be happy.

Warw. That too, my liege, hath been thy Warwick's care:
Happy thou shalt be if the fairest form

That ever caught a gazing lover's eye,
Join'd to the sweetest, most engaging virtues
Can make thee so:—Bona accepts with joy
Thy proffer'd hand: she is indeed a gem
Fit to adorn the brightest crown: to see
Is to admire her; trust me, England's self
The seat of beauty, and the throne of love,
Boasts not a fairer.

Edw. Beauty, good my lord,
Is all ideal, 'tis the wayward child
Of fancy, shifting with the changeful wind
Of fond opinion; what to you appears
The model of perfection, may disgust
My strange capricious taste.

Warw. Such charms would fix
Inconstancy itself:—her winning virtues,
Ev'n if her beauty fail'd, would soon subdue
The rebel heart, and you would learn to love her.

Edw. Is passion to be learn'd then? wouldst thou make
A science of affection, guide the heart,
And teach it where to fix? impossible!
'Tis strange philosophy. [*Rises and comes forward.*
My lord of Warwick,
Your zeal in England's, and in Edward's cause
Merits our thanks; but for the intended marriage
With France's daughter—it may never be.

Warw. Not be! it must: your sacred word is pass'd,
And cannot be recall'd; but three days since
I sign'd the contract, and my honour's pledg'd

For the performance: Heav'ns! whilst fickle France
Is branded 'midst the nations of the earth,
For breach of public faith, shall we, my liege,
Practise ourselves the vices we condemn,
Pass o'er a rival nation's ev'ry virtue,
And imitate their perfidy alone?

Edw. You'll pardon me, my lord, I thought it part
Of a king's pow'r to have a will, to see
With his own eyes, and in life's little feast,
To cater for himself; but 'tis, it seems,
A privilege his servants can refuse him.

Warw. And so they ought—the king, who cannot conquer
His private int'rest for the public welfare,
Knows not his duty.

Edw. Kings, my lord, are born
With passions, feelings, hearts—like other men;
Nor see I yet, why Edward's happiness
Must fall a sacrifice to Warwick's honour.

Warw. My honour, sir, is yours; my cause your own:
Who sent me, and whose image did I bear,
The image of a great and glorious king,
Or of a weak and wav'ring boy?—henceforth,
Choose from the herd of foaming sycophants,
Some needy slave for your mock ambassy's,
To do your work, and stain the name of England
With foul reproach—Edward, I blush for thee,
And for my country; from this hour, expect

From injur'd France contempt, with deep resentment
For broken faith, and enmity eternal.

Edw. Eternal be it then; for, as I prize
My inward peace, beyond the pomp of state,
And all the tinsel glare of fond ambition,
I will not wed her.——Gracious Heav'n! what am I?
The meanest peasant in my realm may choose
His rustic bride, and share with her the sweets
Of mutual friendship and domestic bliss!
Why should my happier subjects then deny me
The common rights, the privilege of nature,
And in a land of freedom thus conspire
To make their king the only slave amongst 'em?

Warw. The worst of slaves is he whom passion rules,
Uncheck'd by reason and the pow'rful voice
Of friendship, which, I fear, is heard no more
By thoughtless Edward—'tis the curse of kings
To be surrounded by a venal herd
Of flatterers, that sooth his darling vices,
And rob their master of his subjects' love.
Nay, frown not, sirs, supported as ye are,
I fear you not—which of this noble train,
These well-beloved counsellors and friends,
Assembled here to witness my disgrace,
Have urg'd you to this base, unmanly falsehood?
Shame on you all! to stain the spotless mind
Of uncorrupted youth, undo the work
Of Warwick's friendly hand, and give him back
A sov'reign so unlike the noble Edward.

Suff. My lord, we thank you for the kind suggestion,
Howe'er ill-founded, and when next we meet,
To give our voice in ought that may concern
The public weal, no doubt shall ask your leave
Ere we proceed.

Pemb. My Lord of Suffolk, speak
But for yourself; Warwick hath too much cause
To be offended: in my poor opinion,
Whate'er you courtiers think, the best support
Of England's throne are equity and truth;
Nor will I hold that man my sov'reign's friend,
Who shall exhort him to forsake his word,
And play the hypocrite: what tie shall bind
The subject to obedience, when his king,
Bankrupt in honour, gives the royal sanction
To perfidy and falsehood?

Buck. It becomes
But ill the Earl of Pembroke——

Edw. Good my lords——
Let us have no dissentions here; we met
For other purposes—some few days hence
We shall expect your counsel in affairs
Of moment—for the present urge no further
This matter—fare ye well.

[*The Council break up and disperse.*

Edw. [*Comes up to* War.] Lord Warwick, keep
In narrower bounds that proud impetuous temper;
It may be fatal: there are private reasons——
When time befits we shall impart them to you;

Mean while—if you have friendship, love, or duty,
No more of Bona——I'm determin'd. [*Exit* Edw.

SCENE IV.

Warw. So:
'Tis well, 'tis very well: I have deserv'd it;
I've borne this callow eagle on my wing,
And now he spurns me from him: 'tis a change
I little look'd for, and sits heavy on me:
Alas! how doubly painful is the wound,
When 'tis inflicted by the hand we love!
Cruel, ungrateful Edward!——
Ha! who's here?
The captive queen! if she has ought to ask
Of me, she comes in luckless hour, for I
Am pow'rless now.

SCENE V.

Enter MARGARET *of* ANJOU.

Warw. Will Margaret of Anjou
Thus deign to visit her acknowledg'd foe?
Marg. Alas! my lord, inur'd to wretchedness
As I am, and familiar with misfortune,
I harbour no resentment; have long since
Forgot that ever Warwick was my foe,
And only wish to prove myself his friend.

Warw. Talk not of friendship, 'tis an empty name,
And lives but in idea; once indeed
I thought I had a friend.———
Marg. Whose name was—Edward;
Read I aright, my lord, and am I not
A shrewd diviner? Yes; that down-cast eye
And gloomy aspect say I am: you look
As if the idol made by your own hands,
Had fall'n upon and crush'd you, is't not so?
Warw. Amazement! nought escapes thy piercing eye,
And penetrating judgment: 'tis too true,
I am a poor disgrac'd, dishonour'd slave,
Not worth thy seeking; leave me, for the tide
Of court preferment flows another way.
Marg. The feast, perhaps, you have provided, suits not
With Edward's nicer palate; he disdains,
How sweet soe'er, to taste a foreign banquet,
And relishes no dainties but his own:
Am I again mistaken?
Warw. Sure thou deal'st
With some all-knowing spirit, who imparts
Each secret purpose to thee, else how knew'st thou
That Edward had refus'd to wed the princess?
Marg. O! it requires no supernatural aid
To trace his actions, nor has Marg'ret trod
The paths of life with unobserving eye;
I could have told you this long since—for know,
The choice is made, the nuptial rights prepar'd,

Which, but for your return, as unexpected
As undesired, had been, ere this, complete;
And, as in duty bound, you then had paid
Your due obedience to our—English queen.

Warw. Determin'd, say'st thou? Gracious Heaven! 'tis well
I am return'd.

Marg. Indeed, my lord, you came
A little out of season, 'twas unkind
To interrupt your master's happiness,
To blast so fair a passion in its bloom,
And check the rising harvest of his love.

Warw. Marg'ret, I thank thee—yes, it must be so:
His blushes, his confusion, all confirm it,
And yet I am amaz'd, astonish'd.

Marg. Wherefore?——
Is it so strange a youthful prince should love?
Is it so strange, a mind, unfraught with wisdom,
And lifted high with proud prosperity,
Should follow pleasure thro' the crooked paths
Of falsehood, should forsake a useless friend,
For the warm joys of animating beauty?

Warw. No: but 'tis strange, that he who knows how much
He ow'd to Warwick: he, who ev'ry hour
Tastes the rich stream of bounty, should forget
The fountain whence it flow'd.

Marg. Alas! my lord,
Had you been chasten'd in affliction's school
As I have been, and taught by sad experience

To know mankind, you had not fall'n a prey
To such delusion.

Warw. Was it like a friend,
Was it like Edward to conceal his love?
Some base, insinuating, artful woman,
With borrow'd charms, perhaps——

Marg. Hold, hold, my lord,
Be not too rash: who fights in darkness oft
May wound a bosom friend: perhaps you wrong
The best, and most accomplish'd of her sex.

Warw. Know you the lady?

Marg. But as fame reports,
Of peerless beauty and transcendent charms,
But for her virtue——I must ask of——you——

Warw. Of me! What virtues? Whose?

Marg. Elizabeth's.

Warw. Amazement! no: it must not, it cannot be:
Elizabeth! he could not, dare not do it!
Confusion! I shall soon discover all. [*Aside.*
But what have I to do with Edward's choice,
Whoe'er she be, if he refuses mine?

Marg. Dissimulation sits but ill, my lord,
On minds like yours: I am a poor weak woman,
And so, it seems, you think me; but suppose
That same all-knowing spirit which you rais'd,
Who condescends so kindly to instruct me,
Should whisper—Warwick knows the pow'r of love
As well as Edward, that Elizabeth
Was his first wish, the idol of his soul;
What say you?——Might I venture to believe it?

Warw. Marg'ret, you might; for 'tis in vain to hide
A thought from thee; it might have told you too,
If it be so, there is not such a wretch
On earth as Warwick: give me but the proof——
Marg. Lord Suffolk was last night dispatch'd to Grafton,
To offer a share in Edward's throne.
Warw. Which she refus'd: did she not, Marg'ret? Say
She did.
Marg. I know not that, my lord, but crowns
Are dazzling meteors in a woman's eye;
Such strong temptations, few of us, I fear,
Have virtue to resist.
Warw. Elizabeth
Has ev'ry virtue, I'll not doubt her faith.
Marg. Edward is young and handsome.
Warw. Curses on him!
Think'st thou he knew my fond attachment there?
Marg. O, passing well, my lord, and when 'twas urg'd
How deeply 't would affect you, swore by Heav'n,
Imperious Warwick ne'er should be the master
Of charms like hers; 'twas happiness, he said,
Beyond a subject's merit to deserve,
Beyond his hope to wish for or aspire to.
Warw. But for that Warwick, Edward's self had been
A subject still—and—may be so—hereafter.
Thou smil'st at my misfortunes.

Marg. I must smile
When I behold a subtle statesman thus
Duped and deluded by a shallow boy,
Sent on a fruitless errand to expose
His country and himself—it was indeed
A master-stroke of policy, beyond,
One should have thought, the reach of years so green
As Edward's, to dispatch the weeping lover,
And seize the glorious opportunity
Of tamp'ring with his mistress here at home.

Warw. Did Nevil, Rutland, Clifford, bleed for this?

Marg. For this doth Henry languish in a dungeon,
And wretched Marg'ret live a life of wo:
For this you gave the crown to pious Edward,
And thus he thanks you for his kingdom.

Warw. Crowns
Are baubles, fit for children like himself
To play with, I have scatter'd many of them:
But thus to cross me in my dearest hope,
The sweet reward of all my toils for him
And for his country; if I suffer it,
If I forgive him, may I live the scorn
Of men, a branded coward, and old age
Without or love or rev'rence be my portion!
Henceforth, good Marg'ret, know me for thy friend,
We will have noble vengeance:—are there not
Still left amongst the lazy sons of peace,
Some busy spirits who wish well to thee,
And to thy cause?

Cliff. Hath Warwick then so soon forgot his Edward?
Think'st thou the frantic earl will e'er exert
His ill-directed powers to pull down
The royal structure, which himself had rais'd?
Never.

Marg. What is there disappointed love
And unrestrain'd ambition will not do?
I tell thee, we are sworn and cordial friends.

Cliff. Thou know'st he hates the house of Lancaster.

Marg. No matter—he has marvellous good skill
In making kings, and I—have business for him.

Cliff. And canst thou then forget the cruel wrongs,
The deep-felt inj'ries of oppressive Warwick,
To join the hand that forg'd thy husband's chains,
And robb'd thee of a crown?

Marg. But what—my Clifford,
If the same hand that ravish'd should restore it!
'Tis a court friendship, and may last as long
As interest shall direct: I've not forgot,
No, nor forgiv'n; I hate, abhor, detest him,
But I will use him as my instrument,
My necessary tool, I'll make him draw
His trait'rous sword, to sheath it in the breast
Of him he loves, then point it to his own:
Yes, Clifford, I have twin'd me round his heart;
Like the fell serpent crept into his bosom,
That I might sting more surely: he shall perish;
I keep him for the last dear precious morsel,
To crown the glorious banquet of revenge.

Cliff. 'Tis what he merits from us, yet th' attempt
Were dangerous, he is still the people's idol.

Marg. And so perhaps shall Marg'ret be; applause
Waits on success; the fickle multitude,
Like the light straw that floats along the stream,
Glide with the current still and follow fortune.
Our prospect brightens every hour:—the people
Are ripe for a revolt: by civil wars,
Long time inur'd to savage scenes of plunder
And desolation, they delight in war:
These English heroes, when once flesh'd with slaughter,
Like the keen mastiff, lose not soon the track
Of vengeance, nor forget the taste of blood.

Cliff. What further succours have we to depend on,
Beside Earl Warwick's?

Marg. O, his name alone
Will be an army to us.

Cliff. If we have it:
Resentment is a short-liv'd passion——what
If Warwick should relent, and turn again
To Edward?

Marg. Then I have a bosom friend
That shall be ready to reward him for it;—
But I have better hopes: without his aid;
We are not friendless: Scotland's hardy sons
Who smile at danger, and defy the storm,
Will leave their barren mountains to defend
That liberty they love: add to the aid

Of gallant Pembroke, and the pow'rs which France
Will send to vindicate her injur'd honour:
Ere Edward can collect his force and take
The field, we shall be thirty thousand strong.

Cliff. But what becomes of the young prince?

Marg. Aye; there
I am indeed unhappy, O my child,
How shall I set him free?—hear, Nature, hear
A mother's pray'r! O guide me with thy counsel,
And teach me how to save my darling boy.
—Aye, now I have it: monitress divine,
I thank thee:—yes; I wait but for the means
Of his escape, then fly this hated palace,
Nor will return till I can call it mine.

SCENE II.

Enter EDWARD, *and* SUFFOLK.

Edw. I fear, we've gone too far: th' indignant Warwick
Ill brook'd our steady purpose; mark'd you, Suffolk,
With what an eye of scorn he turn'd him from us,
And low'r'd defiance—that prophetic woman!
Half of her curse already is fulfill'd,
And I have lost my friend.

Suff. Some friends, perhaps,
Are better lost: you'll pardon me, my liege,
But, were it fitting, I could tell a tale
Would soon convince you—Warwick is as weak—

Edw. As Edward, thou wouldst say.
Suff. But 'twill distress
Thy noble heart too much, I dare not, sir,
Yet one day you must know it.
Edw. Then by thee
Let it be told me, Suffolk, thy kind hand
Will best administer the bitter draught:
Go on, my Suffolk, speak, I charge thee, speak.
Suff. That rival whom you wish'd me to discover—
Edw. Aye, what of him? quick, tell me, hast thou found
The happy traitor? give me but to know
That I may wreak my speedy vengeance on him.
Suff. Suppose that rival were the man whom most
You lov'd, the man, perhaps, whom most you fear'd;
Suppose 'twere—Warwick.
Edw. Ha! it cannot be:
I would not think it for a thousand worlds——
Warwick in love with her, impossible!
Now, Suffolk, do I fear thou speak'st from envy
And jealous hatred at the noble Warwick,
Not from the love of justice or of Edward;
Where didst thou learn this falsehood?
Suff. From the lips
Of truth, from one whose honour and whose word
You will not question; from—Elizabeth.
Edw. From her! nay, then I fear—it must be so.
Suff. When last I saw her, for again I went
By your command, though hopeless of success,
With all the little eloquence that I

Was master of, I urg'd your ardent passion.
Told her how much, how tenderly you lov'd her,
And press'd with eagerness to know the cause
Of her unkind refusal, till at length
Reluctantly, with blushes she confess'd
There was a cause;—she thank'd you for your goodness,
'Twas more, she said, much more than she deserv'd,
She ever should revere her king: and if
She had a heart to give it should be—Edward's.

Edw. So kind, and yet so cruel: well, go on.

Suff. Then told me all the story of her love,
That Warwick long had woo'd her—that her hand
Was promis'd; soon as he return'd from France,
Though once her father cruelly oppos'd it,
They were by his consent to be united.

Edw. O never, Suffolk, may I live to see
That dreadful hour! designing hypocrite.
Are these his arts, is this the friend I lov'd?
By heav'n! she shall be mine; I will assert
A sov'reign's right, and tear her from him—what
If he rebel—another civil war!
'Tis terrible—O that I could shake off
This cumbrous garb of majesty that clings
So close around me, meet him man to man,
And try who best deserves her! but when kings
Grow mad, their guiltless subjects pay the forfeit.
Horrible thought—good Suffolk, for a while
I would be private—therefore wait without,
Let me have no intruders; above all,
Keep Warwick from my sight.——

SCENE III.

Enter WARWICK.

Warw. Behold him here;
No welcome guest, it seems, unless I ask
My lord of Suffolk's leave—there was a time
When Warwick wanted not his aid to gain
Admission here.

Edw. There was a time perhaps,
When Warwick more desir'd and more—deserv'd it.

Warw. Never; I've been a foolish faithful slave;
All my best years, the morning of my life,
Hath been devoted to your service: what
Are now the fruits? disgrace and infamy;
My spotless name which never yet the breath
Of calumny had tainted, made the mock
For foreign fools to carp at: but 'tis fit
Who trust in princes, should be thus rewarded.

Edw. I thought, my lord, I had full-well repay'd
Your services with honours, wealth, and pow'r
Unlimited: thy all-directing hand
Guided in secret ev'ry latent wheel
Of government, and mov'd the whole machine;
Warwick was all in all, and pow'rless Edward
Stood like a cypher in a great account.

Warw. Who gave that cypher worth, and seated thee
On England's throne? thy undistinguish'd name
Had rotted in the dust from whence it sprang,

And moulder'd in oblivion, had not Warwick
Dug from its sordid mine the useless ore,
And stamp'd it with a diadem. Thou know'st
This wretched country, doom'd, perhaps, like Rome,
To fall by its own self-destroying hand,
Tost for so many years in the rough sea
Of civil discord, but for me had perish'd.
In that distressful hour I seiz'd the helm,
Bade the rough waves subside in peace, and steer'd
Your shatter'd vessel safe into the harbour.
You may despise, perhaps that useless aid
Which you no longer want; but know, proud youth,
He who forgets a friend, deserves a foe.

Edw. Know too, reproach, for benefits receiv'd
Pays ev'ry debt, and cancels obligation.

Warw. Why, that indeed is frugal honesty,
A thrifty saving knowledge, when the debt
Grows burthensome, and cannot be discharg'd,
A spunge will wipe out all, and cost you nothing.

Edw. When you have counted o'er the num'rous train
Of mighty gifts your bounty lavish'd on me,
You may remember next the inj'ries
Which I have done you: let me know 'em all,
And I will make you ample satisfaction.

Warw. Thou canst not; thou hast robb'd me of a jewel
It is not in thy pow'r to restore:
I was the first, shall future annals say,
That broke the sacred bond of public trust

And mutual confidence; ambassadors,
In after times, mere instruments, perhaps,
Of venal statesmen, shall recall my name
To witness, that they want not an example,
And plead my guilt, to sanctify their own.
Amidst the herd of mercenary slaves
That haunt your court, could none be found but Warwick,
To be the shameless herald of a lye?

Edw. And wouldst thou turn the vile reproach on me?
If I have broke my faith, and stain'd the name
Of England, thank thy own pernicious counsels
That urg'd me to it, and extorted from me
A cold consent to what my heart abhor'd.

Warw. I've been abus'd, insulted, and betray'd;
My injur'd honour cries aloud for vengeance,
Her wounds will never close!

Edw. These gusts of passion,
Will but inflame them; if I have been right
Inform'd, my lord, besides these dang'rous scars
Of bleeding honour, you have other wounds
As deep, tho' not so fatal: such perhaps
As none but fair Elizabeth can cure.

Warw. Elizabeth!

Edw. Nay, start not, I have cause
To wonder most: I little thought indeed
When Warwick told me I might learn to love,
He was himself so able to instruct me;
But I've discover'd all.——

Warw. And so have I ;
Too well I know thy breach of friendship there,
Thy fruitless base endeavours to supplant me.
Edw. I scorn it, sir—Elizabeth hath charms,
And I have equal right with you t' admire them :
Nor see I aught so godlike in the form,
So all-commanding in the name of Warwick,
That he alone should revel in the charms
Of beauty, and monopolize perfection.
I knew not of your love.
Warw. By Heav'n, 'tis false !
You knew it all, and meanly took occasion,
Whilst I was busy'd in the noble office,
Your grace thought fit to honour me withal,
To tamper with a weak unguarded woman,
To bribe her passions high, and basely steal
A treasure which your kingdom could not purchase.
Edw. How know you that ? but be it as it may,
I had a right, nor will I tamely yield
My claim to happiness, the privilege,
To choose the partner of my throne and bed :
It is a branch of my prerogative.
Warw. Prerogative !—what's that ? the boast of tyrants :
A borrow'd jewel, glitt'ring in the crown
With specious lustre, lent but to betray,
You had it, sir, and hold it—from the people.
Edw. And therefore do I prize it ; I would guard
Their liberties, and they shall strengthen mine :
But when proud faction and her rebel crew

Insult their sov'reign, trample on his laws,
And bid defiance to his pow'r, the people
In justice to themselves, will then defend
His cause, and vindicate the rights they gave.

Warw. Go to your darling people then; for soon,
If I mistake not, 'twill be needful; try
Their boasted zeal, and see if one of them
Will dare to lift his arm up in your cause,
If I forbid them.

Edw. Is it so, my lord!
Then mark my words: I've been your slave too long,
And you have rul'd me with a rod of iron,
But henceforth know, proud peer, I am thy master,
And will be so: the king who delegates
His pow r to others' hands, but ill deserves
The crown he wears.

Warw. Look well then to your own;
It sits but loosely on your head, for know,
The man who injur'd Warwick never pass'd
Unpunish'd yet.

Edw. Nor he who threaten'd Edward—
You may repent it, sir—my guards there—seize
This traitor, and convey him to the tow'r,
There let him learn obedience.

[*Guards enter, seize* Warwick, *and endeavour to disarm him.*

Warw. Slaves, stand off:
If I must yield my sword, I'll give it him
Whom it so long has serv'd; there's not a part
In this old faithful steel, that is not stain'd

With English blood in grateful Edward's cause.
Give me my chains, they are the bands of friendship,
Of a king's friendship, for his sake awhile
I'll wear them.

Edw. Hence: away with him———

Warw. 'Tis well:
Exert your pow'r, it may not last you long;
For now, tho' Edward may forget his friend,
That England will not.—Now, sir, I attend you.

[*Exit.*

Edw. Presumptuous rebel—ha! who's here?

SCENE IV.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My liege,
Queen Marg'ret with the prince her son are fled;
In a few hours she hopes, for so we learn
From those who have pursued her, to be join'd
By th' Earl of Warwick, in his name it seems
She has already rais'd three thousand men.

Edw. Warwick in league with her! O Heav'n! 'tis well
We've crush'd the serpent e'er his poison spread
Throughout our kingdom—guard the palace gates,
Keep double watch; summon my troops together,—
Where is my brother Clarence, Buckingham,
And Pembroke? we must check this foul rebellion.

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

Enter the Earl of SUFFOLK.

Suff. My liege, the Duke of Clarence——

Edw. What of him?

Suff. Hath left the court; this moment I beheld him
In conf'rence with Pembroke, who, it seems,
Is Marg'ret's firmest friend: 'tis whisper'd, both
Will join the queen.

Edw. Well: 'tis no matter: I
Have deeper cause for grief, he cannot feel
A brother's falsehood, who has lost a friend,
A friend like Warwick,—Suffolk, thou behold'st me
Betray'd, deserted by the man I lov'd;
Treated with indifference by her
Whom I ador'd, forsaken by my brother,
And threaten'd by the subjects I protect,
Oppress'd on every side: but, thou shalt see,
I have a soul superior to misfortunes.
Though rebel Clarence wrings my tortur'd heart,
And faithless Warwick braves me, we will yet
Maintain our right——come on, my friend, thou know'st,
Without his boasted aid, I could have gain'd
The crown, without him now I will preserve it.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Tower. Enter the Earl of WARWICK.

Warwick.

MISTAKEN mortals plan delusive schemes
Of bliss, and call futurity their own,
Yet are not masters of a moment—this
Was the appointed time, the very day
Which should have join'd me to Elizabeth
In nuptial bonds:—O cruel memory,
Do not torment me—if there be a crime
Of deeper dye than all the guilty train
Of human vices, 'tis——ingratitude.
'Tis now two years since Henry lost the crown,
And here he is, ev'n in this very prison
A fellow captive now: disgraceful thought!
How will he smile to meet his conqu'ror here!
O for that stoic apathy which lulls
The drowsy soul to sweet forgetfulness!
But 'twill not be:——Elizabeth, where art thou?
Perhaps with Edward—O that thought distracts me:
It is, I fear, as Marg'ret said; she's false.
But when I look around me, can I hope
To find one virtue left in human kind?
My Pembroke too! am I so soon forgotten?
O no; he comes———

SCENE II.

Enter the Earl of PEMBROKE.

Pemb. My friend!

Warw. My Pembroke, welcome:
Thee I have found most just and kind;
But, in the darkness of adversity
The jewel friendship shines with double lustre.

Pemb. I am not of the insect train that bask
In fortune's sunshine, and when ev'ning damps
Arise, are seen no more: no, Warwick, what
I speak, I mean: you have been hardly treated.

Warw. O! Pembroke, didst thou know but half the wrongs
That I have suffer'd, thou wouldst pity me.

Pemb. I would do more, much more, my Warwick: he
Who only pities but insults the wretched;
I come with nobler views, I come to tell thee,
That I have felt thy inj'ries as my own,
And will revenge them too.

Warw. How kind thou art
To feel for Warwick!

Pemb. Ev'ry honest breast
Must feel the inj'ries that a good man suffers:
Thine is the common cause of all: adieu
To English freedom, when our liberty
Shall be dependent on a sov'reign's nod,
When years of honest service shall be paid
With infamy and chains.

Warw. I've not deserv'd them.

Pemb. Nor shalt thou wear them long: for thou hast great
And pow'rful friends—the noble Duke of Clarence.
Behold his signet—this, my Warwick, gain'd me
Admission here——we must be secret.

Warw. Ha!
Then I am not forsaken: Clarence!—

Pemb. Yes:
The gallant youth, with honest zeal, declar'd
He lov'd his brother much, but justice more.

Warw. Then, Edward, I defy thee: gen'rous Clarence!
Thou know'st, the man who thus could treat a friend,
Would soon forget a brother—but say, Pembroke,
How stands the Duke of Buckingham?

Pemb. Fast bound
To Edward; he and that smooth courtier Suffolk
Are the two rotten pillars that support
His tott'ring throne: but Marg'ret——

Warw. Aye: how fares
My new ally? has she escaped the tyrant?

Pemb. She has: and by some wondrous means contriv'd
To free her captive son.

Warw. Tho' I abhor,
I must admire that enterprising woman:
Her active mind is ever on the wing
In search of fresh expedients, to recover
The crown she lost.

Pemb. Already she has rais'd
A pow'rful army ; all the secret foes
Of York's ambitious line rush forth in crowds,
And join her standard : ere to-morrow's sun
Shall dawn upon us, she will set thee free.
Warw. O! Pembroke, nothing wounds the gen'rous mind
So deep as obligations to a foe.
Is there no way to liberty, my friend,
But through the bloody paths of civil war ?
Pemb. I fear there is not.
Warw. Then it must be so :
I could have wish'd—but freedom and revenge
On any terms are welcome.
Pemb. Here then join we
Our hands———
Warw. Our hearts.
Pemb. Now, Warwick, be thou firm
In thy resolves; let no unmanly fears,
No foolish fond remembrance of past friendship
Unnerve thy arm, or shake thy steady purpose.
Warw. No : by my wrongs it shall not : once, thou know'st,
I lov'd him but too well, and this vile prison
Is my reward,—O give me but the use
Of this once pow'rful arm, and thou shalt see
How it shall punish falsehood.—Are thy forces
Prepar'd ?
Pemb. They are, and wait but for my orders ;
Clarence will join us soon : our first great end

Is to secure thy liberty; that done,
We haste to seize the palace and redeem
The fair Elizabeth.

Warw. Redeem her, ha!
Is she a captive too?

Pemb. A willing slave;
A gay state pris'ner, left to roam at large
O'er the young monarch's palace.

Warw. Aye, my Pembroke,
That's more inviting than a prison:—O
She's false, she's false—who sent her there?

Pemb. She came
It seems, to thank him for his royal bounties
To her good father, the new Earl of Rivers,
Who will no doubt persuade her to accept——

Warw. Of Edward's hand—distraction! fly, my friend,
Haste thee to Marg'ret, tell her if she hopes
For Warwick's aid, she must release him now,
Ere Edward's ill-tim'd mercy shall prevent her.

Pemb. I go; my friend, adieu! when next we meet,
I hope to bring thee liberty. [*Exit.*

Warw. Farewell.
She's lost: she's gone: that base seducer Edward,
Hath wrought on her weak mind, it must be so.

SCENE III.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord,
The Lady Elizabeth.
Warw. Amazement! sure
It cannot be! admit her, sir—why, what [*Exit* Mess.
Could bring her here? Edward has sent her hither,
To see if I will crouch to him for pardon;
Be still, my jealous heart.—

SCENE IV.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Eliz. My Warwick!
Warw. 'Tis a grace I look'd not for,
That a fair fav'rite, who so late had tasted
The pleasures of a court, should condescend
To visit thus a poor abandon'd captive.
Eliz. I come to take my portion of misfortune,
To pour the balm of comfort in, and heal,
If possible, the wounds which I had made.
Too well I know I was the fatal cause
Of all thy sorrows,—but the noble Edward,
For so indeed he is———
Warw. And art thou come,
To plead the cause of him who sent me hither?
Eliz. I came to be the messenger of peace,

To calm thy troubled soul, and give thee rest,
To teach my Warwick to forget his wrongs.

Warw. Forget my wrongs! was that thy errand here,
To teach me low submission to a tyrant;
To ask forgiveness, kneel and deprecate
The wrath of blust'ring Edward? If thou com'st
On terms like these to bring me freedom, know
It will not be accepted: now I see
Through all your arts, by Heav'n, I'd rather lose
A thousand lives, than owe one to his bounty.

Eliz. Either my Warwick is much chang'd, and so
I fear he is, or he would never talk
Thus coldly to me, never would despise
A life so precious, if he knew how much
Elizabeth had suffer'd to preserve it.
The gallant Edward, won by my entreaties——

Warw. Entreaties! didst thou then descend so low,
As to entreat him for me?

Eliz. Hadst thou seen,
When I implor'd him to forgive my Warwick,
How kind he look'd, how his repenting heart
Heav'd with the pangs of agonizing friendship,
Thou wouldst have pity'd him.

Warw. Deceitful woman,
I see thy falsehood now, I am betray'd,
And thou art leagu'd with Edward to destroy me.
Go to your royal lover, and unite
Those only fit companions for each other,
A broken friendship, and a perjur'd love:

Give up discarded Warwick, and to make
The compact firm, cement it with my blood.

Eliz. I thought the soul of Warwick far above
Such mean suspicions—Shall the man, whose truth,
Whose constancy, and love have been so long
My bright example, shall he stoop so low,
As thus to listen to an idle tale
Told by some prating courtier? if indeed
Thou couldst believe it, I should pity thee.

Warw. Where is your father, the new Earl of Rivers?
Why sends he not his forces to our aid?

Eliz. He cannot: honour, gratitude, forbid,
That he should lift up his rebellious arm
Against his benefactor! well thou know'st,
Of late, when civil discord reign'd amongst us,
He fought with Henry, and with Henry fell:
When injur'd Edward gen'rously forgave,
Restor'd his forfeit lands, and late advanc'd him
To rank and title.

Warw. Infamy and shame;
The common nets which fearful knav'ry spreads
To catch ambition's fools: mean sordid bribes;
We know the treasure they were meant to purchase.

Eliz. Unkind suggestion! how have I deserv'd it?
Have I for this refus'd a youthful monarch,
And spurn'd his offer'd sceptre at my feet,
To be reproach'd at last by cruel Warwick?
Had I once listen'd to him! had these eyes
Been dazzled with the splendour of a court,

I need not thus have chang'd it for a dungeon.
But since I am suspected, witness Heav'n,
And witness Warwick to my vows! henceforth,
Dear as thou art, I cast thee from my love;
Elizabeth will never wed—a traitor.

Warw. Am I awake, and did Elizabeth
Say she would never wed her faithful Warwick?
Then bear me witness too, all-judging Heav'n!
Here yield I up all visionary dreams
Of future bliss, of liberty, or life.
Ev'n the sweet hope of vengeance, that alone
Sustain'd my spirit, loses all its charms;
I wish'd for freedom but to purchase thine:
For life, but to enjoy it with my love,
And she disclaims me.

Eliz. Heav'n forbid! O Warwick,
Let not the tide of passion thus overwhelm
Thy reason.

Warw. Canst thou pardon me? thou know'st
Th' unguarded warmth, the weakness of my nature.
I would not wrong thee, but I've been so oft,
So cruelly deceiv'd.

Eliz. I know thou hast;
But never by Elizabeth.

Warw. O no!
It is impossible that perfidy
Should wear a form like thine. [*Looking at her.*
I wonder not
That Edward lov'd, no; when I look on thee,
All beauteous, all enchanting as thou art:
By Heav'n! I think I could almost forgive him.

Eliz. Then wherefore not be reconcil'd?
Warw. To whom?
The author of my wrongs? It cannot be:
Know, I have promis'd Marg'ret to destroy him.
Eliz. Destroy thy friend! ungen'rous, cruel Warwick,
Is't not enough that thou hast triumph'd here?
Already we have pierc'd his noble heart
With the keen pangs of disappointed love;
And wouldst thou wound his breast with added sorrows;
Wouldst thou involve a nation in his ruin?
Warw. Elizabeth, no more: alas! too well
Thou know'st, there is a powerful advocate
In Warwick's breast, that pleads for perjur'd Edward.
Eliz. Cherish the soft emotion: O my Warwick!—
Warw. That angel form can never plead in vain;
But then, my friends—where is my solemn vow
To Marg'ret, and to Pembroke? There's the tie;
My honour's dearer to me——
Eliz. Than thy love;
Dearer, much dearer, than Elizabeth?
But I have done: farewell, my lord, I see
Thy deep resentment is not to be mov'd
By my weak influence o'er thee. [*Going.*
Warw. Stay, I charge thee.
Eliz. What is this phantom, Honour, this proud idol
That tramples thus on every humble virtue?
This cruel, bloody Molock, that delights
In human sacrifice! O! would to Heav'n

I were its only victim! but with me,
You offer up your country and your king.

Warw. Think on my vow, think on my promise given.

Eliz. Thy league with Marg'ret must be fatal: grant
We should succeed, and Lancaster once more
Assume the throne; how dear the victory,
That's purchas'd with our fellow-subjects blood!
Alas! such triumphs make the conqu'ror weep.
But if we fail——

Warw. Impossible!

Eliz. O! think
Betimes! what dreadful punishments await
The vanquish'd rebel: thou, perhaps, my love,
Shalt then be doom'd on th' ignominious block
To fall inglorious; and, when thou art gone,
Who shall defend thy poor Elizabeth?

Warw. Alarming thought! It staggers my firm purpose,
And makes me half a villain.

SCENE V.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Madam, the king demands your presence, I
Have orders to convey you to the palace.

Warw. And wilt thou leave me?

Eliz. This, my Warwick, this

Is the decisive moment, now determine,
Accept of mercy, ere it be too late;
Ere hasty Edward——Shall I say thou wilt
Return to thy obedience, and receive
Thy pardon? Shall I? Speak my love.

Warw. Perhaps
I may accept it, if 'tis brought by thee.

Eliz. Then we shall meet in happiness——

Warw. Farewell! [*Exit* Eliz.

SCENE VI.

Warw. Now to those worst companions in affliction,
My own sad thoughts again; they're gloomy all,
And, like my habitation, full of horror.
I like not Edward's message—if he hears
My league with Margaret, he still has pow'r
To make me feel his rage: I have deserv'd it—
[*A trampling heard without.*
Methought I heard a noise—this way they come,
Perhaps it is the messenger of death———

SCENE VII.

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pemb. The messenger of vengeance—see her sword;
Accept it and be free. [*Offers the sword.*

Warw. First let me know
To whom I am indebted for't.

Pemb. To me.
Soon as the rumour of thy foul disgrace
Had reach'd the public ear, th' impatient people
Uncertain of thy fate, tumultuous throng'd
Around the palace, and demanded thee;
Give us our Warwick, give us back, they cry'd,
Our hero, our deliv'rer—I stepp'd forth
And bade them, instant, if they wish'd to save
The best of men from infamy and death,
To follow me: transported they obey'd:
I led them hither: forc'd the prison gates,
And brought thee this—direct it as thou wilt.
[*Gives the sword.*

Warw. Welcome once more, thou dearest gift of Heav'n,
Immortal liberty! my friend, I thank thee.
O Pembroke, wouldst thou hadst been here! my love,
My dear Elizabeth is true.

Pemb. At least
You think so.

Warw. She has told me such sweet truths;
Edward repents him sorely, he is griev'd
At his ingratitude.

Pemb. And well he may;
I fear thou art betray'd: alas! my Warwick,
Thy open, gen'rous, unsuspecting virtue,
Thinks ev'ry heart as honest as thy own.
Thou know'st not Edward—nor Elizabeth.
The kingdom is in arms, and ev'ry hour,
It is expected France will join the queen:

England will want its great protector's aid.
Edward and Rivers have conspired to cheat
Thy credulous ear, and who so fit to spread
The flimsy web as thy Elizabeth,
Their fair ambassadress? I see thou'rt caught.

Warw. By Heav'n, it may be so: I am the sport
Of fortune and of fraud.

Pemb. Away, my friend:
It is not now a time to think of her:
Marg'ret, supported by thy pow'rful name,
And join'd by Clarence, waits us at the head
Of fifteen thousand men, who, eager all
To crush a tyrant, and pull down oppression,
Attend thy wish'd-for presence; not a soldier
Will act or move till Warwick shall direct them.
Edward and England's fate depend on thee.

Warw. Away, my friend, I'll follow thee.

[*Exit* Pembroke.

Yet stop
A moment—let not passion hurry me
To base dishonour—if my country calls
For Warwick's aid, shall I not hear her voice,
And save her? Pembroke may have private views,
And subtle Marg'ret too—Elizabeth!
I must not lose thee—O! direct me, Heav'n! [*Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth.

THE royal pardon came too late, and Pembroke
Already has releas'd him; he is gone——
Elizabeth may never see him more.
A thousand terrors haunt me, a fond father,
A guiltless sov'reign, a distracted lover,
Fame, fortune, friends, and country, all depend
On one eventful moment—hark! the sound
Of distant groans; perhaps the king—perhaps
My Warwick bleeds. O! agonizing thought!
Great God of armies, whose all-guiding hand
Directs the fate of nations, O! look down
On thy own image, let not cruel discord
Divide their kindred souls! in pity hear,
Pour thy benignant spirit o'er their hearts,
And once more knit them in the bonds of peace!

SCENE II.

Enter SUFFOLK.

Suff. The pray'r of innocence is always heard.

Eliz. Ha! Suffolk, whither hast'st thou? art thou come——

Suff. I come to heal thy sorrows, lovely fair one,

To tell thee, Edward, and thy much-lov'd Warwick,
Once more are friends.

Eliz. Indeed! O welcome news!
My joy's too great for utt'rance: tell me, Suffolk,
How was it? Speak, is Warwick safe? O Heaven!

Suff. A moment's patience, and I'll tell thee all.
Marg'ret, thou know'st, had rais'd a pow'rful force,
That doubled Edward's troops; elate with pride,
And almost sure of victory, she urg'd
The tardy spearmen; on they rush'd, as if
Secure of conquest: the unhappy king
Stood nobly firm, and seem'd to brave his fate,
When Warwick like a guardian god appear'd:
His noble mien and all-commanding look
Struck deep attention; every eye was bent
Upon him, and an awful silence reign'd
O'er either host, he rais'd his voice on high,
And stop, he cry'd, your sacrilegious hands,
Nor touch my friend: who pierces Edward's breast,
Must pass through mine: I rais'd him to the throne,
And will support him there: to you I gave,
From you my fellow soldiers I expect him:
Howe'er the cruel wrongs have wounded me,
He never injur'd you, and, I—forgive him.
He spake, and instant through the gazing crowd
A murmur ran; down dropp'd their nerveless arms,
As if enchanted by some magic pow'r,
And with one voice they cry'd, long live king Edward!

Eliz. How powerful is the tongue of eloquence,
When in the cause of virtue!—well, what follow'd?

Suff. Encourag'd by the shouting soldiers, Edward
On like a modest virgin wishing came,
Yet fearful. Warwick with a bridegroom's speed
To meet him flew; into each other's arms
They ran with speechless joy: the tender scene
Affected ev'ry heart, and the rough soldier,
Unused to melting sympathy, forgot
His ruthless nature, and dissolv'd in tears.

Eliz. Sweet reconcilement! then, Elizabeth,
Thou didst not plead in vain; but, say, how brook'd
The haughty queen this unexpected change?

Suff. Abash'd, confounded, for a while she strove
To stem the torrent, but in vain; then fled
Precipitate.

Eliz. But where, O where's my Warwick?

Suff. With a few chosen squadrons he pursues
The disappointed Marg'ret.

Eliz. O my fears!
I know not why, but at that hateful name
I tremble ever, my foreboding heart
Presages something dreadful.

Suff. Do not vex
Thy tender mind with visionary dangers.

Eliz. O! would to Heaven that he were shelter'd here,
And safe within these arms!

Suff. Be not alarm'd:
He is the care of Heav'n, all good men love
All bad ones fear him.

Eliz. Such superior merit

Must have a thousand foes, the constant mark
Of envy's poison'd darts.

Suff. There Suffolk feels
The keen reproach; with blushes I confess
There was a time, when, urg'd by fond ambition,
I look'd on Warwick with a jealous eye:
But this last noble deed hath won my heart,
And I am now a convert to his virtues;
But see, the king approaches.

SCENE III.

Enter King EDWARD.

Edw. Health and peace,
And happiness to fair Elizabeth!
Thou art no stranger to the joyful news;
The lustre of those speaking eyes declares it.

Eliz. Suffolk, ev'n now, hath bless'd me with the tidings.

Edw. O! 'tis amazement all: Elizabeth,
When last we met, thou wert the suppliant, now
'Tis I must ask forgiveness, I who injur'd
The dearest, best of men; O! thou hast sav'd
Edward from shame, and England from destruction.

Eliz. Did I not say my Warwick would be just?

Edw. Thou didst, and on those beauteous lips fair truth
And soft persuasion dwell; long time he stood
Inflexible, and deaf to friendship's voice,

Listen'd to nought but all subduing love.
In after-times, thy name shall be enroll'd
Amongst the great deliv'rers of their country.
Eliz. I have no title to the lavish praise
Thy gen'rous heart bestows; I only said
What duty prompted, and what love inspir'd;
Indulgent Heav'n has crown'd it with success.
Edw. Thou hast done all: I am indebted to thee
For more, much more than I can e'er repay.
Long time, with shame, I own hath Warwick soar'd
Above me, but I will not be outdone
For ever by this proud aspiring rival:
Poor as I am, there yet is one way left
To pay the debt of gratitude I owe him,
One great reward for such exalted virtues,
Thyself, Elizabeth.
Eliz. What means my lord,
My royal master?
Edw. Yes; when next we meet
I will bestow it on him, will resign
All my fond claim to happiness and thee;
Tho, thy dear image ne'er can be effac'd
From Edward's breast, tho' still I dote upon thee,
Tho' I could hang for ever on thy beauties;
Yet will I yield them to their rightful lord;
Warwick has earn'd, Warwick alone deserves them.
Eliz. Would he were here to thank thee for this goodness!
Know, gen'rous prince, Elizabeth has long
Admir'd thy virtues, and could love admit

Of a divided heart, the noble Edward
Would share it with his friend.

SCENE IV.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My royal liege,
The rebels are dispers'd, queen Marg'ret's son
Was slain in the pursuit—and she———
Edw. I hope
Secur'd———
Mess. Is taken pris'ner, and will soon
Be here———
Edw. But where's Lord Warwick?
Mess. Sir—the queen——

SCENE V.

Enter MARGARET, *Prisoner.*

Marg. Once more I am your prisoner.
Edw. 'Twill be prudent
Henceforth to keep you so.
Marg. You dare not!
Thou think'st, perhaps, that I shall sue to thee
For mercy: no; in Marg'ret of Anjou,
Thou seest the wife, and daughter of a king.
A spirit not to be subdu'd; though fall'n,
Triumphant still; and, though a prisoner, free.

For know, I bear a mind above the reach
Of fortune or of Edward—I have lost
All I could wish to live for in my child;
And gain'd what most I wish'd to gain, revenge!
Or life or death are now indiff'rent to me.

Edw. For thy unbounded goodness, Power supreme,
Accept our praise!

Eliz. [*Kneeling.*] Accept our humble pray'r!

Marg. Insulting piety! the common trick
Of hypocrites and slaves: when ye shall know
What Marg'ret knows, ye may not be so thankful.
Methinks 'tis pity Warwick is not here
To join in your devotion.

Eliz. Would to Heav'n
He were!

Marg. That monster, that perfidious slave,
Who broke his faith to Marg'ret, and to thee;
Thy coward soul, unable to defend
The treasure thou hadst stolen, could meanly stoop
To court the traitor whom thou dar'st not punish.
Not so the injur'd Marg'ret—she repell'd
The wrongs she felt, and the deceiver met
The fate he merited.

Edw. What fate?——Ev'n now,
Crown'd with immortal wreaths, the hero comes
To bless his friends, and punish guilt like thine.

Marg. Proud and deluded wretches! I look down
With pity on you: captive as I am,
'Tis mine to judge and punish; be it yours
To hear and tremble.

Edw. Ha!

Eliz. What can this mean?

Marg. If I mistake not, Warwick is your friend,
Your lover too, I think.

Eliz. My lord, my husband.

Marg. Know then, that friend, that lover, perjur'd Warwick,
Hath not an hour to live.

Edw. What murth'rous hand——

Marg. Mine, tyrant, mine: think not I mean to hide
The noble deed; it is my happiness,
It is my glory: thou wilt call me base,
Blood-thirsty, cruel, savage, and revengeful.
But here I stand acquitted to myself,
And ev'ry feeling heart that knows my wrongs.——
To late posterity dethroned queens
And weeping mothers shall applaud my justice.

Edw. Justice, on whom?

Marg. Can Edward ask me? Who
Imprison'd Henry, robb'd me of a crown,
And plac'd it on a proud usurper's head?
Who gave his sacred promise to a queen,
And broke it? who, for which indignant Heav'n
Chastis'd him, basely murther'd my sweet boy?
Bereft of honour, fortune, husband, child,
Depriv'd of ev'ry comfort, what remain'd
For me but vengeance, what for him but death?

Edw. What hast thou done? When? Where? Speak, murth'ress, speak.

Marg. Press'd by surrounding multitudes, and made
A slave, they dragg'd me to the conqu'ror's tent,
There the first horrid object I beheld,
Was the pale corse of my poor bleeding child:
There—as th' insulting Warwick stood, and seem'd
To triumph o'er him—from my breast I drew
A poniard forth, and plung'd it in his heart.
Th' astonish'd soldiers throng'd around him, seiz'd
And brought me here—now to your pray'rs again.
[Elizabeth *faints.*

Edw. She faints, good Suffolk, help there, help, support,
Assist her.—Lead her in. [*Exit* Elizabeth.
If it be true,
As much I fear it is, a thousand deaths
Were punishment too little for thy guilt:
Thou shalt be tortur'd.

Marg. Tyrant, I defy thee;
Thy threats appall not me: prepare your tortures,
Let them be sharp and cruel as thyself,
All that ingenious malice can suggest,
Or power inflict, 'twill be my comfort still,
They cannot be so great as those you feel.

Edw. Guards, take the monster hence, let her be chain'd
In some deep dungeon, dark as her own thoughts,
There let her perish—hence, away with her.

Marg. Despair and horror visit thee—farewell——
He comes, my triumph is complete—look there!
[*Exit.*

SCENE VI.

Enter WARWICK, *leaning on Two Soldiers.*

Warw. Where is he? Lead me, lead me to my king.

Edw. My Warwick! my preserver!—she shall bleed
For this in ev'ry vein.

Warw. Think not of her,
She has no power to hurt thee! and with guilt
Like hers, 'tis punishment enough to live:
This is no time for vengeance; death comes on
With hasty strides, 'tis but a little while,
A few short moments, and we part for ever.
My friend———

Edw. I am not worthy of the name,
For I disgrac'd, dishonour'd, murder'd thee;
Edward's unkindness was the cause of all:
Canst thou forgive me?

Warw. O! may Warwick's crimes
Ne'er meet forgiveness from offended Heav'n,
If from my soul I do not pardon, love,
And honour thee!

Edw. Away, let me support him;
'Tis the last office I shall e'er perform
For thee, my Warwick——Wilt thou lean upon me,
And seal my pardon with one kind embrace?

Warw. We never hated.

Edw. But my love was blind.

Warw. And blinder my resentment.

Edw. I forgot
Thy services.

Warw. And I remember'd not
Thou wert my king——My sweet Elizabeth,
Where is she? Edward, do not keep her from me,
We are no rivals now.

Edw. Shock'd at the news
Of thy untimely fate, she sunk beneath it,
And fainted in these arms: I seiz'd th' occasion,
And bade her weeping maidens bear her hence:
This would have been a dreadful sight indeed.

Eliz. [*Without.*] I can, I will support it.

Warw. Ha! that voice——
Sure 'tis Elizabeth's!

SCENE VII.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Eliz. O! give me way,
For I must see him—O! my Warwick!

Warw. O!
This is too much, the bitterness of death
Is to be sever'd thus from those we love.

Edw. Why would you bring her here?
[*To the Attendants.*

Warw. Elizabeth,
Be comforted.

Eliz. O no, it is my doom
Never to taste of joy or comfort more:
No; from this hateful world will I retire,
And mourn my Warwick's fate, imploring Heav'n
That I may soon wear out my little store
Of hopeless days, and join thee in the tomb.

Warw. That must not be: I've done my friend a wrong,
And only thou canst make atonement for it.
Thy hand, Elizabeth, if e'er thou lov'st,
Observe me now——thine, Edward.—For my sake
Cherish this beauteous mourner, take her from me,
As the last present of a dying friend.

Edw. If aught could make the precious gift more dear,
It would be, Warwick, that it came from thee.
O! I will guard her with a parent's care
From every ill, watch over and protect her;
And when the memory of thee shall awake,
As oft it will, her poignant griefs, repel
The rising sigh, wipe off the flowing tear,
And strive to charm her to forgetfulness.

Warw. Wilt thou indeed? Then I shall die in peace.

Eliz. Yet thou may'st live.

Warw. Impossible:—I feel
The hand of death press cold upon my heart,
And all will soon be o'er—I've liv'd to save
My falling country, to repent my crimes,
Redeem my honour, and restore my king.

Edw. Alas! my friend, the memory of thee
Will poison every bliss.

Warw. All-healing time
That closes ev'ry wound, shall pour its balm
O'er thine.—Mean while, remember Warwick's fate.
I gave my word to Margaret, and broke it;
Heav'n is not to be mock'd, it soon o'ertakes us,
And in our crime we meet our punishment.

O, Edward! if thou hop'st that length of days,
And fair prosperity shall crown thy wishes,
Beware of passion and resentment—make
Thy people's good and happiness thy own,
Discourage faction, banish flatt'rers, keep
Thy faith inviolate, and reign in peace.
I can no more—My love! Have mercy, Heav'n! [*Dies.*

Edw. He's gone!——

Eliz. And with him all my hopes of bliss.

Edw. Let ev'ry honour to a soldier due,
Attend the hero to his tomb—mean while,
Deep in the living tablet of my heart,
Will I engrave thy words—illustrious shade!
Living thou wert my counsellor and friend,
And dead I will remember and obey thee.

Eliz. Warwick, farewell! I shall not long survive thee.

Edw. I hope thou wilt—Elizabeth, remember
His dying charge, think on thy promise giv'n.
Thou shalt remain with me, with me lament
Our common benefactor; we will sit
And talk together of my Warwick's virtues,
For I will try to emulate them all,
And learn, by copying him, to merit thee.
His great example shall inspire my breast
With patriot zeal, shall teach me to subdue
The power of faction, vanquish party rage,
And make me, what alone I wish to be,
The happy king of an united people. [*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

Spoken by Mrs. YATES.

EXHAUSTED quite with prisons, racks, and death,
Permit me here to take a little breath!
You who have seen my actions, known their springs,
Say, are we women such insipid *things?*
Say, lords of the creation, mighty men!
In what *have you surpass'd us,* where? *and* when?
I come to know to whom *the palm is due,*
To us weak vessels, or to stronger you?
Against your conqu'ring swords, I draw—my fan,
Come on!—now parry Marg'ret, if you can.
[Sets herself in a posture of defence.
Stand up, ye boasters! [To the Pit.] *don't there sneaking sit;*
Are you for Pleasure, Politics, *or* Wit?
The Boxes smile to see me scold the Pit.
Their *turn is next—and though I will not wrong 'em,*
A woful havoc there will be among 'em.——
You, our best friends, [To the Pit.] *love, cherish, and respect us;*
Not take our fortunes, marry, and neglect us.
You think indeed, that as you please, you rule us,
And with a strange importance often school us!

Yet let each citizen describe a brother,
I'll tell you what you say of one another.
My neighbour leads, poor soul, a woful life,
A worthy man—but govern'd by his wife!
How, say you? what, all silent?—then, 'tis true:
We rule the city—Now, great sirs, to you.
[To the Boxes.
What is your *boast?—Would you, like me, have done,*
To free a captive wife, or save a son?
Rather than run such danger of your lives,
You'd leave your children, and lock up your wives.
When with your noblest deeds a nation rings!
You are but puppets, and we play the strings.
We plan no battles—true—but out of sight,
Crack goes the fan,—and armies halt or fight!
You have th' advantage, Ladies—wisely reap it,
And let me hint the only way to keep it.
Let men of vain ideas have their fill,
Frown, bounce, stride, strut,—while you, with happy skill,
Like anglers, use the finest silken thread;
Give line enough—nor check the tugging head:
The fish will *flounder—you with gentle hand,*
And soft degrees, must bring the trout *to land:*
A more specific nostrum cannot be—
Probatum est—*and never fails with* Me.

THE END.

8:22.08
B428

THE ROMAN FATHER. V.2

A

TRAGEDY,

ALTERED FROM MR. W. WHITEHEAD.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by Inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

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MDCCXCII.

THE ROMAN FATHER.

MR. WHITEHEAD does not disguise his obligations to CORNEILLE; and there are who think it would have been better if they had been even yet more considerable.

But WHITEHEAD was wedded to classic models, and he thought the complexity of the French Intrigue would violate the unity of his subject. The tragedy of CORNEILLE has therefore the most business—yet its scenes are cold and declamatory, and WHITEHEAD, who saw this, could not keep the chill invasion from his own Scenes.

When HENDERSON, as it were shewing a lightning before death, threw into one exclamation in the character of HORATIUS, the true tragic tone of nature and passion, he reached the perfection of the art—For the opportunity he rather made it, than found it. When VALERIA demands.——

What could he do, my lord, when three opposed him? the Actor collected himself, and with an energy of voice and action, that struck the heart like the thunderbolt, piercingly exclaimed, DIE!

The tone vibrates still upon our ear, it was never surpassed, not even by the shriek of Mrs. CRAWFORD's "Was he alive?" Both electrified.

PROLOGUE.

BRITONS, to-night, in native pomp we come,
True heroes all, from virtuous ancient Rome;
In those far distant times, when Romans knew
The sweets of guarded liberty, like you;
And, safe from ills which force or faction brings,
Saw freedom reign beneath the smile of kings.

Yet from such times, and such plain chiefs as these,
What can we frame a polish'd age to please?
Say, can you listen to the artless woes
Of an old tale, which every school-boy knows?
Where to your hearts alone the scenes apply;
No merit theirs but pure simplicity.

Our bard has play'd a most adventurous part,
And turn'd upon himself the critic's art:
Stripp'd each luxuriant plume from Fancy's wings,
And torn up similies from vulgar things:
Nay, ev'n each moral, sentimental stroke,
Where not the character but poet spoke,
He lopp'd as foreign to his chaste design;
Nor spar'd an useless, tho' a golden line.

These are his arts; if these cannot atone
For all those nameless errors yet unknown,

If, shunning faults which nobler bards commit,
He wants the force to strike th' attentive pit,
Be just, and tell him so; he asks advice,
Willing to learn, and would not ask it twice.
Your kind applause may bid him write—beware!
Or kinder censure teach him to forbear.

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

TULLUS HOSTILIUS, *King of Rome*, - - Mr. Aickin.
HORATIUS, *a Roman Senator*, - - - Mr. Farren.
PUBLIUS HORATIUS, *his Son*, - - - Mr. Pope.
VALERIUS, *a young Patrician*, - - - Mr. Davies.

Women.

HORATIA, *daughter to* Horatius, - - - Mrs. Merry.
VALERIA, *sister to* Valerius, - - - Mrs. Bernard.

Citizens, Guards, and Attendants.

SCENE, *Rome.*

THE ROMAN FATHER.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Room in HORATIUS's *House A Soldier crosses the Stage,* HORATIA *following.*

Horatia.

STAY, soldier. As you parted from my father,
Something I overheard of near concern,
But all imperfectly. Said you not Alba
Was on the brink of fate, and Rome determin'd
This day to crush her haughty rival's power,
Or perish in th' attempt?

Sold. 'Twas so resolv'd
This morning, lady, ere I left the camp.
Our heroes are tir'd out with ling'ring war,
And half-unmeaning fight.

Horatia. "Alas! I hop'd
"The kind remorse which touch'd the kindred states,
"And made their swords fall lightly on the breasts
"Of foes they could not hate, might have produc'd
"A milder resolution." Then this day

Is fix'd for death or conquest? [*He bows.*] To me death,
Whoever conquers! [*Aside.*] I detain you, sir.
Commend me to my brothers; say, I wish——
But wherefore should I wish? The gods will crown
Their virtues with the just success they merit——
Yet let me ask you, sir———

Sold. My duty, lady,
Commands me hence. Ere this they have engag'd;
And conquest's self would lose its charms to me,
Should I not share the danger.

As the Soldier goes out, VALERIA *enters, who looks first on him, and then on* HORATIA.

Valeria. My dear Horatia, wherefore wilt thou court
The means to be unhappy? Still enquiring,
Still more to be undone. I heard it too;
And flew to find thee, ere the fatal news
Had hurt thy quiet, that thou might'st have learnt it
From a friend's tongue, and dress'd in gentler terms.

Horatia. Oh, I am lost, Valeria! lost to virtue.
Ev'n while my country's fate, the fate of Rome,
Hangs on the conqueror's sword, this breast can feel
A softer passion, and divide its cares.
Alba to me is Rome. Wouldst thou believe it?
I would have sent, by him thou saw'st departing,
Kind wishes to my brothers; but my tongue
Denied its office, and this rebel heart
Ev'n dreaded their success. Oh, Curiatius!
Why art thou there, or why an enemy?

Valeria. Forbear this self-reproach; he is thy husband,
And who can blame thy fears? If fortune make him
A while thy country's foe, she cannot cancel
Vows register'd above. What tho' the priest
Had not confirm'd it at the sacred altar;
Yet were your hearts united, and that union
Approv'd by each consenting parent's choice.
Your brothers lov'd him as a friend, a brother;
And all the ties of kindred pleaded for him,
And still must plead, whate'er our heroes teach us,
Of patriot-strength. Our country may demand
We should be wretched, and we must obey;
But never can require us not to feel
That we are miserable: nature there
Will give the lie to virtue.

Horatia. True; yet sure
A Roman virgin should be more than woman.
Are we not early taught to mock at pain,
And look on danger with undaunted eyes?
But what are dangers, what the ghastliest form
Of death itself?—Oh, were I only bid
To rush into the Tiber's foaming wave,
"Swol'n with uncommon floods," or from the height
Of yon Tarpeian rock, whose giddy steep
Has turn'd me pale with horror at the sight,
I'd think the task were nothing! but to bear
These strange vicissitudes of tort'ring pain,
To fear, to doubt, and to despair as I do——

Valeria. And why despair? Have we so idly learn'd

The noblest lessons of our infant days,
Our trust above? Does there not still remain
The wretch's last retreat, the gods, Horatia?
'Tis from their awful wills our evils spring,
And at their altars may we find relief.
Say, shall we thither?—Look not thus dejected,
But answer me. A confidence in them,
Ev'n in this crisis of our fate, will calm
Thy troubled soul, and fill thy breast with hope.

Horatia. Talk not of hope; "the wretch on yonder plain,
"Who hears the victor's threats, and sees his sword
"Impending o'er him, feels no surer fate,
"Tho' less delay'd than mine." What should I hope?
That Alba conquer?—Curs'd be every thought
Which looks that way! "The shrieks of captive matrons
"Sound in my ears!"

Valeria. Forbear, forbear, Horatia;
Nor fright me with the thought. Rome cannot fall.
Think on the glorious battles she has fought;
Has she once fail'd, though oft expos'd to danger;
And has not her immortal founder promis'd
That she should rise the mistress of the world?

Horatia. And if Rome conquers, then Horatia dies.

Valeria. Why wilt thou form vain images of horror,
Industrious to be wretched? Is it then
Become impossible that Rome should triumph,
And Curiatius live? He must, he shall;

Protecting gods shall spread their shields around him,
And love shall combat in Horatia's cause.

Horatia. Think'st thou so meanly of him?—No, Valeria,
His soul's too great to give me such a trial;
Or could it ever come, I think, myself,
Thus lost in love, thus abject as I am,
I should despise the slave who dar'd survive
His country's ruin. Ye immortal powers!
I love his fame too well, his spotless honour,
At least I hope I do, to wish him mine
On any terms which he must blush to own.

Horatius. [*Without.*] What ho! Vindicus.

Horatia. What means that shout?—"Might we "not ask, Valeria?"
Didst thou not wish me to the temple?—Come,
I will attend thee thither; the kind gods
Perhaps may ease this throbbing heart, and spread
At least a temporary calm within.

Valeria. Alas, Horatia, 'tis not to the temple
That thou wouldst fly; the shout alone alarms thee.
But do not thus anticipate thy fate;
Why shouldst thou learn each chance of varying war,
"Which takes a thousand turns, and shifts the scene
"From bad to good, as fortune smiles or frowns?"
Stay but an hour perhaps, and thou shalt know
The whole at once.—I'll send—I'll fly myself
To ease thy doubts, and bring thee news of joy.

Horatia. Again, and nearer too—I must attend thee.

Valeria. Hark! 'tis thy father's voice, he comes to cheer thee.

Enter Horatius, *and* Valerius.

Horatius. [*Entering.*] News from the camp, my child!
Save you, sweet maid! [*Seeing* Valeria.
Your brother brings the tidings, for, alas!
I am no warrior now; my useless age,
Far from the paths of honour loiters here
In sluggish inactivity at home.
Yet I remember———

Horatia. You'll forgive us, sir,
If with impatience we expect the tidings.

Horatius. I had forgot; the thoughts of what I was
Engross'd my whole attention.—Pray, young soldier,
Relate it for me; you beheld the scene,
And can report it justly.

Valerius. Gentle lady,
The scene was piteous, though its end be peace.

Horatia. Peace? O, my fluttering heart! by what kind means?

Valerius. 'Twere tedious, lady, and unnecessary
To paint the disposition of the field;
Suffice it, we were arm'd, and front to front
The adverse legions heard the trumpet's sound:
But vain was the alarm, for motionless,
And wrapt in thought they stood; the kindred ranks
Had caught each other's eyes, nor dar'd to lift
The fault'ring spear against the breast they lov'd.

Again th' alarm was given, and now they seem'd
Preparing to engage, when once again
They hung their drooping heads, and inward mourn'd;
Then nearer drew, and at the third alarm,
Casting their swords and useless shields aside,
Rush'd to each other's arms.

Horatius. 'Twas so, just so,
(Tho' I was then a child, yet I have heard
My mother weeping oft relate the story)
Soft pity touch'd the breasts of mighty chiefs,
Romans and Sabines, when the matrons rush'd
Between their meeting armies, and oppos'd
Their helpless infants, and their heaving breasts
To their advancing swords, and bade them there
Sheath all their vengeance.—But I interrupt you—
Proceed, Valerius, they would hear th' event.
—And yet, methinks, the Albans—pray go on.

Valerius. Our King Hostilius from a rising mound
Beheld the tender interview, and join'd
His friendly tears with theirs; then swift advanc'd,
Ev'n to the thickest press, and cried, My friends,
If thus we love, why are we enemies?
Shall stern ambition, rivalship of power,
Subdue the soft humanity within us?
Are we not join'd by every tie of kindred?
And can we find no method to compose
These jars of honour, these nice principles
Of virtue, which infest the noblest mind?

Horatius. There spoke his country's father! this transcends

The flight of earth-born kings, whose low ambition
But tends to lay the face of nature waste,
And blast creation!—How was it receiv'd?

Valerius. As he himself could wish, with eager transport.
In short, the Roman and the Alban chiefs
In council have determin'd, that since glory
Must have her victims, and each rival state,
Aspiring to dominion, scorns to yield,
From either army shall be chose three champions
To fight the cause alone, and whate'er state
Shall prove superior, there acknowledg'd power
Shall fix th' imperial seat, and both unite
Beneath one common head.

Horatia. Kind Heaven, I thank thee!
Bless'd be the friendly grief that touch'd their souls!
"Bless'd be Hostilius for the generous counsel!
"Bless'd be the meeting chiefs!" and bless'd the tongue,
Which brings the gentle tidings!

Valeria. Now, Horatia,
Your idle fears are o'er.

Horatia. Yet one remains.
Who are the champions? Are they yet elected?
Has Rome———

Valerius. The Roman chiefs now meet in council,
And ask the presence of the sage Horatius.

Horatius. [*After having seemed some time in thought.*]
But still, methinks, I like not this, to trust
The Roman cause to such a slender hazard—
Three combatants!——'tis dangerous——

Horatia. [*In a fright.*] My father!

Horatius. I might, perhaps, prevent it——

Horatia. Do not, sir,
Oppose the kind decree.

Valerius. Rest satisfied
Sweet lady, 'tis so solemnly agreed to,
Not even Horatius's advice can shake it.

Horatius. And yet 'twere well to end these civil broils:
The neighb'ring states might take advantage of them.
—Would I were young again! How glorious
Were death in such a cause!—And yet, who knows
Some of my boys may be selected for it——
Perhaps may conquer——Grant me that, kind gods,
And close my eyes in transport!—Come, Valerius,
I'll but dispatch some necessary orders,
And strait attend thee.——Daughter, if thou lov'st
Thy brothers, let thy prayers be pour'd to Heav'n,
That one at least may share the glorious task. [*Exit.*

Valerius. Rome cannot trust her cause to worthier hands.
They bade me greet you, Lady. [*To* Horatia.
" Well, Valeria,
" This is your home, I find: your lovely friend,
" And you, I doubt not, have indulg'd strange fears,
" And run o'er all the horrid scenes of war.

" *Valeria.* Though we are women, brother, we are Romans,
" Not to be scar'd with shadows, though not proof
" 'Gainst all alarms, when real danger threatens."

Horatia. [*With some hesitation.*] My brothers, gentle sir, you said were well.
Saw you their noble friends, the Curiatii?
The truce, perhaps, permitted it.

Valerius. Yes, Lady,
I left them jocund in your brothers' tent,
Like friends, whom envious storms awhile had parted,
Joying to meet again.

Horatia. Sent they no message?

Valerius. None, fair-one, but such general salutation
As friends would bring unbid.

Horatia. Said Caius nothing?

Valerius. Caius?

Horatia. Ay, Caius; did he mention me?

Valerius. 'Twas slightly, if he did, and 'scapes me now——
O yes, I do remember, when your brother
Ask'd him, in jest, if he had ought to send,
"A sigh's soft waftage, or the tender token
"Of tresses breeding to fantastic forms,"
To sooth a love-sick maid (your pardon, lady)
He smil'd, and cry'd, Glory's the soldier's mistress.

Horatia. Sir, you'll excuse me—something of importance——
My father may have business——Oh, Valeria!
[*Aside to* Valeria.
Talk to thy brother, know the fatal truth
I dread to hear, and let me learn to die,
If Curiatius has indeed forgot me. [*Exit.*

Valerius. She seems disorder'd!

Valeria. Has she not cause?
Can you administer the baneful potion,
And wonder at th' effect?

Valerius. You talk in riddles!

Valeria. They're riddles, brother, which your heart unfolds,
Though you affect surprise. Was Curiatius
Indeed so cold? Poor shallow artifice,
The trick of hopeless love! I saw it plainly.
Yet what could you propose? An hour's uneasiness
To poor Horatia; for be sure by that time
She sees him, and your deep-wrought schemes are air.

Valerius. What could I do? this peace has ruin'd me;
While war continued, I had gleams of hope;
Some lucky chance might rid me of my rival,
And time efface his image in her breast.
But me———

Valeria. Yes, now you must resolve to follow
Th' advice I gave you first, and root this passion
Entirely from your heart; for know, she dotes,
Ev'n to distraction dotes on Curiatius;
And every fear she felt, while danger threaten'd,
Will now endear him more.

Valerius. Cruel Valeria,
You triumph in my pain!

Valeria. By Heaven, I do not;
I only would extirpate every thought
Which gives you pain, nor leave one foolish wish

For hope to dally with. " When friends are mad,
" 'Tis most unkind to humour their distraction;
" Harsh means are necessary.
" *Valerius.* Yet we first
" Should try the gentler.
" *Valeria.* Did I not? Ye powers!
" Did I not sooth your griefs, indulge your fondness,
" While the least prospect of success remain'd?
" Did I not press you still to urge your suit,
" Intreat you daily to declare your passion,
" Seek out unnumber'd opportunities,
" And lay the follies of my sex before you;
" *Valerius.* Alas! thou know'st, Valeria, woman's
" heart
" Was never won by tales of bleeding love:
" 'Tis by degrees the sly enchanter works
" Assuming friendship's name, and fits the soul
" For soft impressions, ere the fault'ring tongue,
" And guilty-blushing cheek, with many a glance
" Shot inadvertent, tells the secret flame.
" *Valeria.* True, these are arts for those that love
at leisure;
" You had no time for tedious stratagem;
" A dang'rous rival press'd, and has succeeded."
Valerius. I own my error—yet once more assist me—
Nay, turn not from me, by my soul I meant not
To interrupt their loves.—Yet, should some accident,
'Tis not impossible, divide their hearts,
I might, perhaps, have hope: therefore 'till marriage
Cuts off all commerce, and confirms me wretched,

Be it thy task, my sister, with fond stories,
Such as our ties of blood may countenance,
To paint thy brother's worth, his power in arms,
His favour with the king, "but most of all,
"That certain tenderness of soul which steals
"All women's hearts," then mention many a fair,
No matter whom, that sighs to call you sister.

Valeria. Well, well, away—Yet tell me, ere you go,
How did this lover talk of his Horatia?

Valerius. Why will you mention that ungrateful subject?
Think what you've heard me breathe a thousand times
When my whole soul dissolv'd in tenderness;
'Twas rapture all; what lovers only feel,
Or can express when felt. He had been here,
But sudden orders from the camp detain'd him.
Farewell, Horatius waits me—but remember,
My life, nay, more than life, depends on you. [*Exit.*

Valeria. Poor youth! he knows not how I feel his anguish,
Yet dare not seem to pity what I feel.
How shall I act betwixt this friend and brother?
Should she suspect his passion, she may doubt
My friendship too; and yet to tell it her
Were to betray his cause. No, let my heart
With the same blameless caution still proceed;
To each inclining most as most distrest;
Be just to both, and leave to Heav'n the rest! [*Exit.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter HORATIA *and* VALERIA.

Horatia.

ALAS, "how easily do we admit
"The thing we wish were true! yet sure," Valeria,
This seeming negligence of Curiatius
Betrays a secret coldness at the heart.
May not long absence, or the charms of war,
Have damp'd, at least, if not effac'd his passion?
I know not what to think.

Valeria. Think, my Horatia,
That you're a lover, and have learn'd the art
To raise vain scruples, and torment yourself
With every distant hint of fancied ill.
Your Curiatius still remains the same.
My brother idly trifled with your passion,
Or might, perhaps, unheedingly relate
What you too nearly feel. But see, your father.

Horatia. He seems transported; sure some happy news
Has brought him back thus early. Oh, my heart!
I long, yet dread to ask him. Speak, Valeria.

Enter HORATIUS.

Valeria. You're soon return'd, my lord.

Horatius. Return'd, Valeria!
My life, my youth's return'd, I tread in air!

—I cannot speak; my joy's too great for utterance.
—Oh, I could weep!—my sons, my sons are chosen
Their country's combatants; not one, but all!

Horatia. My brothers, said you, sir?

Horatius. All three, my child,
All three are champions in the cause of Rome.
Oh, happy state of fathers! thus to feel
New warmth revive, and springing life renew'd
Even on the margin of the grave!

Valeria. The time
Of combat, is it fix'd?

Horatius. This day, this hour
Perhaps decides our doom.

Valeria. And is it known
With whom they must engage?

Horatius. Not yet, Valeria;
But with impatience we expect each moment
The resolutions of the Alban senate.
And soon may they arrive, that ere we quit
Yon hostile field, the chiefs who dar'd oppose
Rome's rising glories, may with shame confess
The gods protect the empire they have rais'd.
Where are thy smiles, Horatia? Whence proceeds
This sullen silence, when my thronging joys
Want words to speak them? Pr'ythee, talk of empire,
Talk of those darlings of my soul, thy brothers.
Call them whate'er wild fancy can suggest,
Their country's pride, the boast of future times,
The dear defence, the guardian gods of Rome!—

By Heaven, thou stand'st unmov'd, nor feels thy breast
The charms of glory, the extatic warmth
Which beams new life, and lifts us nearer Heaven!

Horatia. My gracious father, with surprise and transport
I heard the tidings, as becomes your daughter.
And like your daughter, were our sex allow'd
The noble privilege which man usurps,
Could die with pleasure in my country's cause.
But yet, permit a sister's weakness, sir,
To feel the pangs of nature, and to dread
The fate of those she loves, however glorious.
And sure they cannot all survive a conflict
So desperate as this.

Horatius. Survive! By Heaven,
I could not hope that they should all survive.
No; let them fall. If from their glorious deaths
Rome's freedom spring, I shall be nobly paid
For every sharpest pang the parent feels.
Had I a thousand sons, in such a cause
I could behold them bleeding at my feet,
And thank the gods with tears!

Enter PUBLIUS HORATIUS.

Pub. My father! [*Offering to kneel.*

Horatius. Hence!
Kneel not to me—stand off; and let me view
At distance, and with reverential awe,
The champion of my country!—Oh, my boy!

That I should live to this—my soul's too full;
Let this and this speak for me.—Bless thee, bless thee! [*Embracing him.*
But wherefore art thou absent from the camp?
Where are thy brothers? Has the Alban state
Determin'd? Is the time of combat fix'd?

Pub. Think not, my lord, that filial reverence,
However due, had drawn me from the field,
Where nobler duty calls; a patriot's soul
Can feel no humbler ties, nor knows the voice
Of kindred, when his country claims his aid.
It was the king's command I should attend you,
Else had I staid 'till wreaths immortal grac'd
My brows, and made thee proud indeed to see
Beneath thy roof, and bending for thy blessing,
Not thine, Horatius, but the son of Rome!

Horatius. Oh, virtuous pride!—'tis bliss too exquisite
For human sense!—thus, let me answer thee.
[*Embracing him again.*
Where are my other boys?

Pub. They only wait
'Till Alba's loit'ring chiefs declare her champions,
Our future victims, sir, and with the news
Will greet their father's ear.

Horatius. It shall not need,
Myself will to the field. Come, let us haste,
My old blood boils, and my tumultuous spirits
Pant for the onset. O, for one short hour
Of vigorous youth, that I might share the toil

Now with my boys, and be the next my last!

Horatia. My brother!

Pub. My Horatia! ere the dews
Of evening fall, thou shalt with transport own me;
Shalt hold thy country's saviour in thy arms,
Or bathe his honest bier with tears of joy.
Thy lover greets thee, and complains of absence
With many a sigh, and many a longing look
Sent tow'rd the towers of Rome.

Horatia. Methinks, a lover
Might take th' advantage of the truce, and bear
His kind complaints himself, not trust his vows
To other tongues, or be oblig'd to tell
The passing winds his passion.

Pub. Dearest sister,
He with impatience waits the lucky moment
That may with honour bear him to your arms.
Didst thou but hear how tenderly he talks,
How blames the dull delay of Alban councils,
And chides the ling'ring minutes as they pass,
'Till fate determines, and the tedious chiefs
Permit his absence, thou wouldst pity him.
But soon, my sister, soon shall every bar
Which thwarts thy happiness be far away.
We are no longer enemies to Alba,
This day unites us, and to-morrow's sun
May hear thy vows, and make my friend my brother.

Horatius. [*Having talked apart with* Valeria. ['Tis truly Roman.—Here's a maid, Horatia,
Laments her brother lost the glorious proof

Of dying for his country.—Come, my son,
Her softness will infect thee; pr'ythee, leave her.
Horatia. [*Looking first on her father, and then tenderly on her brother.*] Not 'till my soul has pour'd its wishes for him.
Hear me, dread god of war, protect and save him!
[*Kneeling.*
For thee, and thy immortal Rome, he fights!
Dash the proud spear from every hostile hand
That dare oppose him; may each Alban chief
Fly from his presence, or his vengeance feel!
And when in triumph he returns to Rome, [*Rising.*
Hail him, ye maids, with grateful songs of praise,
And scatter all the blooming spring before him;
Curs'd be the envious brow that smiles not then,
Curs'd be the wretch that wears one mark of sorrow,
Or flies not thus with open arms to greet him.

Enter TULLUS HOSTILIUS, VALERIUS, *and Guards.*

Valerius. The king, my lord, approaches.
Horatius. Gracious sir,
Whence comes this condescension?
Tullus. Good old man;
Could I have found a nobler messenger,
I would have spar'd myself th' ungrateful task
Of this day's embassy, for much I fear
My news will want a welcome.
Horatius. Mighty king!
Forgive an old man's warmth——They have not sure

Made choice of other combatants!—My sons,
Must they not fight for Rome?

Tullius. Too sure they must.

Horatius. Then I am blest!

Tullus. But that they must engage
Will hurt thee most, when thou shalt know with whom.

Horatius. I care not whom.

Tullus. Suppose your nearest friends,
The Curiatii, were the Alban choice,
Could you bear that? Could you, young man, support
A conflict there?

Pub. I could perform my duty,
Great sir, though even a brother should oppose me.

Tullus. Thou art a Roman! Let thy king embrace thee.

Horatius. And let thy father catch thee from his arms.

Tullus. [*To* Publius.] Know then, that trial must be thine. The Albans
With envy saw one family produce
Three chiefs, to whom their country dared entrust
The Roman cause, and scorn'd to be outdone.

Horatia. Then I am lost indeed; was it for this,
For this, I pray'd! [*Swoons.*

Pub My sister!

Valeria. My Horatia! *Oh, support her!*

Horatius. Oh, foolish girl, to shame thy father thus!
Here, bear her in.

[Horatia *is carried in,* Valerius *and* Valeria *follow.*

I am concern'd, my sovereign,
That even the meanest part of me should blast
With impious grief a cause of so much glory.
But let the virtue of my boy excuse it.

Tullus. It does most amply. She has cause for sorrow.
The shock was sudden, and might well alarm
A firmer bosom. "The weak sex demand
"Our pity, not our anger; their soft breasts
"Are nearer touch'd, and more expos'd to sorrows
"Than man's experter sense. Nor let us blame
"That tenderness which smooths our rougher natures,
"And softens all the joys of social life."
We leave her to her tears. For you, young soldier,
You must prepare for combat. Some few hours
Are all that are allow'd you. But I charge you
Try well your heart, and strengthen every thought
Of patriot in you. Think how dreadful 'tis
To plant a dagger in the breast you love;
To spurn the ties of nature, and forget
In one short hour whole years of virtuous friendship.
Think well on that.

Pub. I do, my gracious sovereign;
And think the more I dare subdue affection,
The more my glory.

Tullus. True; but yet consider,
Is it an easy task to change affections?
In the dread onset can your meeting eyes
Forget their usual intercourse, and wear

At once the frown of war, and stern defiance?
Will not each look recall the fond remembrance
Of childhood past, when the whole open soul
Breath'd cordial love, and plighted many a vow
Of tend'rest import? Think on that, young soldier,
And tell me if thy breast be still unmov'd?

Pub. Think not, oh, king, howe'er resolv'd on combat,
I sit so loosely to the bonds of nature,
As not to feel their force. I feel it strongly.
I love the Curiatii, and would serve them
At life's expence: but here a nobler cause
Demands my sword: for all connections else,
All private duties are subordinate
To what we owe the public. Partial ties
Of son and father, husband, friend or brother,
Owe their enjoyments to the public safety,
And without that were vain.—Nor need we, sir,
Cast off humanity, and to be heroes
Cease to be men. As in our earliest days,
While yet we learn'd the exercise of war,
We strove together, not as enemies,
Yet conscious each of his peculiar worth,
And scorning each to yield; so will we now
Engage with ardent, not with hostile minds,
Not fir'd with rage, but emulous of fame.

Tullus. Now I dare trust thee; go and teach thy brothers
To think like thee, and conquest is your own.
This is true courage, not the brutal force

Of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve
Of virtue and of reason. He who thinks
Without their aid to shine in deeds of arms,
Builds on a sandy basis his renown;
A dream, a vapour, or an ague fit
May make a coward of him.—Come, Horatius,
Thy other sons shall meet thee at the camp,
For now I do bethink me, 'tis not fit
They should behold their sister thus alarm'd.
Haste, soldier, and detain them. [*To one of the guards.*

Horatius. Gracious sir,
We'll follow on the instant.

Tullus. Then farewell.
When next we meet, 'tis Rome and liberty!
[*Exit with guards.*

Horatius. Come, let me arm thee for the glorious toil.
I have a sword, whose lightning oft has blaz'd
Dreadfully fatal to my country's foes;
Whose temper'd edge has cleft their haughty crests,
And stain'd with life-blood many a reeking plain.
This shalt thou bear; myself will gird it on,
And lead thee forth to death or victory. [*Going.*
——And yet, my Publius, shall I own my weakness;
Though I detest the cause from whence they spring,
I feel thy sister's sorrows like a father.
She was my soul's delight.

Pub. And may remain so.
This sudden shock has but alarm'd her virtue,
Not quite subdued its force. At least, my father,

Time's lenient hand will teach her to endure
The ills of chance, and reason conquer love.

Horatius. Should we not see her?

Pub. By no means, my lord;
You heard the king's commands about my brothers,
And we have hearts as tender sure as they.
Might I advise, you should confine her closely,
Lest she infect the matrons with her grief,
And bring a stain we should not wish to fix
On the Horatian name.

Horatius It shall be so.
We'll think no more of her. 'Tis glory calls,
And humbler passions beat alarms in vain. [*Exit.*

As HORATIUS *goes off,* HORATIA *enters at another Door.*

Horatia. Where is my brother?—Oh, my dearest Publius,
If e'er you lov'd Horatia, ever felt
That tenderness which you have seem'd to feel,
Oh, hear her now!

Pub. What wouldst thou, my Horatia?

Horatia. I know not what I would—I'm on the rack,
Despair and madness tear my lab'ring soul.
—And yet, my brother, sure you might relieve me.

Pub. How! by what means? By Heaven, I'll die to do it.

Horatia. You might decline the combat.

Pub. Ha!

Horatia. I do not

Expect it from thee. Pr'ythee, look more kindly.
—And yet, is the request so very hard?
I only ask thee not to plunge thy sword
Into the breast thou lov'st, not kill thy friend;
Is that so hard?—I might have said thy brother.

Pub. What canst thou mean? Beware, beware, Horatia;
Thou know'st I dearly love thee, nay, thou know'st
I love the man with whom I must engage.
Yet hast thou faintly read thy brother's soul,
If thou canst think intreaties have the power,
Though urg'd with all the tenderness of tears,
To shake his settled purpose: they may make
My task more hard, and my soul bleed within me,
But cannot touch my virtue.

Horatia. 'Tis not virtue
Which contradicts our nature, 'tis the rage
Of over-weening pride. Has Rome no champions
She could oppose but you? Are there not thousands
As warm for glory, and as tried in arms,
Who might without a crime aspire to conquest,
Or die with honest fame?

Pub. Away, away!
Talk to thy lover thus. But 'tis not Caius
Thou wouldst have infamous.

Horatia. Oh, kill me not
With such unkind reproaches. Yes, I own
I love him, more———

Pub. Than a chaste Roman maid
Should dare confess.

Horatia. Should dare! What means my brother?
I had my father's sanction on my love,
And duty taught me first to feel its power.
—Should dare confess!—Is that the dreadful crime?
Alas, but spare him, spare thy friend, Horatius,
And I will cast him from my breast for ever.
Will that oblige thee?—"Only let him die
"By other hands, and I will learn to hate him."

Pub. Why wilt thou talk thus madly? Love him still!
And if we fall the victims of our country,
(Which Heav'n avert!) wed, and enjoy him freely.

Horatia. Oh, never, never. What, my country's bane!
The murderer of my brothers! may the gods
First "tear me, blast me, scatter me on winds,
"And" pour out each unheard-of vengeance on me!

Pub. Do not torment thyself thus idly—Go,
Compose thyself, and be again my sister.

Re-enter HORATIUS, *with the Sword.*

Horatius. This sword in Veii's field——What dost thou here?
Leave him, I charge thee, girl——Come, come, my Publius,
Let's haste where duty calls.

Horatia. What! to the field?
He must not, shall not go; here will I hang—
Oh, if you have not quite cast off affection!
If you detest not your distracted sister——

Horatius. Shame of thy race, why dost thou hang upon him?
Wouldst thou entail eternal infamy
On him, on me, and all?
Horatia. Indeed I would not,
I know I ask impossibilities;
Yet pity me, my father!
Pub. Pity thee!
Begone, fond wretch, nor urge my temper thus.
By Heaven, I love thee as a brother ought.
Then hear my last resolve; if Fate, averse
To Rome and us, determine my destruction,
I charge thee wed thy lover; he will then
Deserve thee nobly. Or, if kinder gods
Propitious hear the prayers of suppliant Rome,
And he should fall by me, I then expect
No weak upbraidings for a lover's death,
But such returns as shall become thy birth,
A sister's thanks for having sav'd her country. [*Exit.*
Horatia. Yet stay—Yet hear me, Publius—But one word.
Horatius. Forbear, rash girl, thou'lt tempt thy father
To do an outrage might perhaps distract him.
Horatia. Alas, forgive me, sir, I'm very wretched,
Indeed I am—Yet I will strive to stop
This swelling grief, and bear it like your daughter.
Do but forgive me, sir.
Horatius. I do, I do——
Go in, my child, the gods may find a way

To make thee happy yet. But on thy duty,
Whate'er reports may reach, or fears alarm thee,
I charge thee come not to the field.

Horatia. I will not,
If you command it, sir. But will you then,
As far as cruel honour may permit,
Remember that your poor Horatia's life
Hangs on this dreadful contest?

Horatius. "Lead her in." [*Exit* Horatia,
[*Looking after her.*] Spite of my boasted strength, her griefs unman me.
—But let her from my thoughts! The patriot's breast
No hopes, no fears, but for his country knows,
And in her danger loses private woes. [Exit.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Continues. VALERIUS *and* VALERIA *meeting.*

Valerius.

Now, my Valeria, where's the charming she
That calls me to her? with a lover's haste
I fly to execute the dear command.

Valeria. 'Tis not the lover, but the friend she wants,
If thou dar'st own that name.

Valerius. The friend, my sister!
There's more than friendship in a lover's breast,
More warm, more tender is the flame he feels—

Valeria. Alas! these raptures suit not her distress:

She seeks th' indulgent friend, whose sober sense,
Free from the mists of passion, might direct
Her jarring thoughts, and plead her doubtful cause.

Valerius. Am I that friend? Oh, did she turn her thought
On me for that kind office?

Valeria. Yes, Valerius.
She chose you out to be her advocate
To Curiatius; 'tis the only hope
She now dares cherish; her relentless brother
With scorn rejects her tears, her father flies her,
And only you remain to sooth her cares,
And save her ere she sinks.

Valerius. Her advocate
To Curiatius!

Valeria. 'Tis to him she sends you,
To urge her suit, and win him from the field.
But come, her sorrows will more strongly plead
Than all my grief can utter.

Valerius. To my rival!
To Curiatius plead her cause, and teach
My tongue a lesson which my heart abhors!
Impossible! Valeria, pr'ythee say
Thou saw'st me not; the business of the camp
Confin'd me there. Farewell. [*Going.*

Valeria. What means my brother?
You cannot leave her now; for shame, turn back;
Is this the virtue of a Roman youth?
Oh, by these tears!——

Valerius. They flow in vain, Valeria:

Nay, and thou know'st they do. Oh, earth and heaven!
This combat was the means my happier stars
Found out to save me from the brink of ruin;
And can I plead against it, turn assassin
On my own life?

Valeria. Yet thou canst murder her
Thou dost pretend to love; away, deceiver!
I'll seek some worthier messenger to plead
In beauty's cause; but first inform Horatia,
How much Valerius is the friend she thought him.
[*Going.*

Valerius. Oh, heavens! stay, sister; 'tis an arduous task.

Valeria. I know the task is hard, and thought I knew
Thy virtue too.

Valerius. I must, I will obey thee.
Lead on.—Yet pr'ythee, for a moment leave me,
'Till I can recollect my scatter'd thoughts,
And dare to be unhappy.

Valeria. My Valerius!
I fly to tell her you but wait her pleasure. [*Exit.*

Valerius. Yes, I will undertake this hateful office;
It never can succeed.—Yet at this instant
It may be dangerous, while the people melt
With fond compassion.—No, it cannot be;
His resolution's fix'd, and virtuous pride
Forbids an alteration. To attempt it
Makes her my friend, and may afford hereafter

A thousand tender hours to move my suit.
That hope determines all. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Enter HORATIA *and* VALERIA. HORATIA *with a Scarf in her Hand.*

Horatia. Where is thy brother? Wherefore stays he thus?
Did you conjure him? did he say he'd come?
I have no brothers now, and fly to him
As my last refuge. Did he seem averse
To thy entreaties? Are all brothers so?
"Alas, thou told'st me he spake kindly to thee!
"'Tis me, 'tis me he shuns; I am the wretch
"Whom virtue dares not make acquaintance with.
"Yet fly to him again, entreat him hither,
"Tell him for thy sake to have pity on me.
"Thou are no enemy to Rome, thou hast
"No Alban husband to claim half thy tears,
"And make humanity a crime."
Valeria. Dear maid,
Restrain your sorrows; I've already told you
My brother will with transport execute
Whatever you command.
Horatia. Oh! wherefore then
Is he away? Each moment now is precious;
If lost, 'tis lost for ever, and if gain'd,

Of Rome and Alba will approve such mildness.
Tell him his wife, if he will own that name,
Intreats him from the field; his lost Horatia
Begs on her trembling knees he would not tempt
A certain fate, and murder her he loves.
Tell him, if he consents, she fondly swears,
By every god the varying world adores,
" By this dear pledge of vow'd affection, swears,"
To know no brothers and no sire but him;
With him, if honour's harsh commands require it,
She'll wander forth, and seek some distant home,
Nor ever think of Rome or Alba more.

" *Valeria.* Well, well, he will. Do not torment thyself.

[Horatia *catches hold of the scarf, which she looked upon attentively while* Valeria *spoke.*

" *Horatia.* Look here, Valeria, where my needle's art
" Has drawn a Sabine virgin, drown'd in tears
" For her lost country, and forsaken friends;
" While by her side the youthful ravisher
" Looks ardent love, and charms her griefs away.
" I am that maid distress'd, divided so
" 'Twixt love and duty. But why rave I thus?
" Haste haste to Curiatius—and yet stay;
" Sure I have something more to say to him:
" I know not what it was."

Valerius. Could I, sweet lady,
But paint your grief with half the force I feel it,
I need but tell it him, and he must yield.

Horatia. It may be so. Stay, stay; be sure you tell him,
If he rejects my suit, no power on earth
Shall force me to his arms. I will devise——
I'll die and be reveng'd!

Valeria. Away, my brother!
But, Oh, for pity, do your office justly!
[*Aside to* Valerius.
Let not your passion blind your reason now;
But urge your cause with ardor.

Valerius. By my soul,
I will, Valeria. Her distress alarms me;
And I have now no interest but hers. [*Exit.*

" *Valeria.* Come, dearest maid, indulge not thus your sorrows;
" Hope smiles again, and the sad prospect clears.
" Who knows th' effect your message may produce?
" The milder senators ere this perhaps
" Have mov'd your lover's mind; and if he doubts,
" He's yours."

Horatia. He's gone—I had a thousand things—
And yet I'm glad he's gone. Think you, Valeria,
Your brother will delay?—They may engage
Before he reaches them.

Valeria. The field's so near,
That a few minutes brings him to the place.
" And 'tis not probable the senators
" So soon should yield a cause of so much justice.

" *Horatia.* Alas! they should have thought on that before.

" 'Tis now too late. The lion when he's rous'd
" Must have his prey, whose den we might have pass'd
" In safety while he slept. To draw the sword,
" And fire the youthful warrior's breast to arms
" With awful visions of immortal fame,
" And then to bid him sheath it, and forget
" He ever hop'd for conquest and renown—
" Vain, vain attempt!
" *Valeria.* Yet when that just attempt
" Is seconded by love, and beauty's tears
" Lend their soft aid to melt the hero down,
" What may we not expect?
" *Horatia* My dear Valeria!
" Fain would I hope I had the power to move him."
Valeria. My dear Horatia, success is yours already.
Horatia. And yet, should I succeed, the hard-gain'd strife
May chance to rob me of my future peace.
He may not always with the eyes of love
Look on that fondness which has stabb'd his fame.
He may regret too late the sacrifice
He made to love, and a fond woman's weakness;
And think the milder joys of social life
But ill repay him for the mighty loss
Of patriot-reputation!
Valeria. Pray, forbear;
And search not thus into eventful time
For ills to come. " This fatal temper, friend,
" Alive to feel, and curious to explore

" Each distant object of refin'd distress,
" Shuts out all means of happiness, nor leaves it
" In fortune's power to save you from destruction."
Like some distemper'd wretch, your wayward mind
Rejects all nourishment, or turns to gall
The very balm that should relieve its anguish.
He will admire thy love, which could persuade him
To give up glory for the milder triumph
Of heart-felt ease and soft humanity.

Horatia. I fain would hope so. Yet we hear not of him.
Your brother, much I fear, has su'd in vain.
Could we not send to urge this slow express?—
This dread uncertainty! I long to know
My life or death at once.

" *Valeria.* The wings of love
" Cannot fly faster than my brother's zeal
" Will bear him for your service.

" *Horatia.* I believe it,
" Yet doubt it too. My sickly mind unites
" Strange contradictions."

Valeria. Shall I to the walls?
I may from thence with ease survey the field,
And can dispatch a messenger each moment,
To tell thee all goes well.

Horatia. My best Valeria!
Fly then; " I know thy heart is there already."
Thou art a Roman maid; and though thy friendship
Detains thee here with one who scarce deserves
That sacred name, art anxious for thy country.

But yet for charity think kindly of me;
For thou shalt find by the event, Valeria,
I am a Roman too, however wretched. [*Exit* Valeria.
Am I a Roman then? Ye powers! I dare not
Resolve the fatal question I propose.
If dying would suffice, I were a Roman:
But to stand up against this storm of passions,
Transcends a woman's weakness. Hark! what noise?
'Tis news from Curiatius!—Love, I thank thee!

Enter a Servant.

Well, does he yield? Distract me not with silence.
Say, in one word——

Serv. Your father——

Horatia. What of him?
Would he not let him yield? Oh, cruel father!

Serv. Madam, he's here——

Horatia. Who?

Serv. Borne by his attendants.

Horatia. What mean'st thou?

Enter HORATIUS, *led in by his Servants.*

Horatius. Lead me yet a little onward;
I shall recover straight.

Horatia. My gracious sire!

Horatius. Lend me thy arm, Horatia—So—My child,
Be not surpris'd; an old man must expect
These little shocks of nature; they are hints
To warn us of our end,

Horatia. How are you, sir?

Horatius. Better, much better. My frail body could not
Support the swelling tumult of my soul.

Horatia. No accident, I hope, alarm'd you, sir!
My brothers——

Horatius. Here, go to the field again,
You, Cautus and Vindicius, and observe
Each circumstance. I shall be glad to hear
The manner of the fight.

Horatia. Are they engag'd?

Horatius. They are, Horatia. But first let me thank thee
For staying from the field. I would have seen
The fight myself; but this unlucky illness
Has forc'd me to retire. Where is thy friend?

Enter a Servant, who gives a paper to HORATIA, *and retires.*

What paper's that? Why dost thou tremble so?
Here, let me open it. [*Takes the paper and opens it.*] From Curiatius!

Horatia. Oh, keep me not in this suspense, my father!
Relieve me from the rack.

Horatius. He tells thee here,
He dare not do an action that would make him
Unworthy of thy love; and therefore——

Horatia. Dies!——
Well—I am satisfied.

Horatius. I see by this
Thou hast endeavour'd to persuade thy lover
To quit the combat. Coulast thou think, Horatia,
He'd sacrifice his country to a woman?

Horatia. I know not what I thought. He proves too plainly,
Whate'er it was, I was deceiv'd in him
Whom I applied to.

Horatius. Do not think so, daughter;
Could he with honour have declin'd the fight,
I should myself have join'd in thy request,
And forc'd him from the field. But think, my child,
Had he consented, and had Alba's cause,
Supported by another arm, been baffled,
What then couldst thou expect? Would he not curse
His foolish love, and hate thee for thy fondness?
Nay, think, perhaps, 'twas artifice in thee
To aggrandize thy race, and lift their fame
Triumphant o'er his ruin and his country's.
Think well on that, and reason must convince thee.

Horatia. [*Wildly.*] Alas! had reason ever yet the power
To talk down grief, or bid the tortur'd wretch
Not feel his anguish? 'Tis impossible.
Could reason govern, I should now rejoice
They were engag'd, and count the tedious moments
Till conquest smil'd, and Rome again was free.
Could reason govern, I should beg of Heaven
To guide my brother's sword, and plunge it deep
Ev'n in the bosom of the man I love;

I should forget he ever won my soul,
Forget 'twas your command that bade me love him,
Nay, fly perhaps to yon detested field,
And spurn with scorn his mangled body from me.

Horatius. Why wilt thou talk thus? Pry'thee, be more calm.
I can forgive thy tears; they flow from nature;
And could have gladly wish'd the Alban state
Had found us other enemies to vanquish.
But Heaven has will'd it, and Heaven's will be done!
The glorious expectation of success
Buoys up my soul, nor lets a thought intrude
To dash my promis'd joys! What steady valour
Beams from their eyes: just so, if fancy's power
May form conjecture from his after-age,
Rome's founder must have look'd, when, warm in youth,
And flush'd with future conquest, forth he march'd
Against proud Acron, with whose bleeding spoils
He grac'd the altar of Feretrian Jove——.
Methinks I feel recover'd: I might venture
Forth to the field again. What ho! Volscinius!
Attend me to the camp.

Horatia. My dearest father,
Let me entreat you stay; the tumult there
Will discompose you, and a quick relapse
May prove most dangerous. I'll restrain my tears,
If they offend you.

Horatius. Well, I'll be advis'd.

'Twere now too late; ere this they must have conquer'd.
And here's the happy messenger of glory.

Enter VALERIA.

Valeria. All's lost, all's ruin'd! freedom is no more!

Horatius. What dost thou say?

Valeria. That Rome's subdu'd by Alba.

Horatius. It cannot be. Where are my sons? All dead?

Valeria. Publius is still alive—the other two
Have paid the fatal debt they ow'd their country.

Horatius. Publius alive! You must mistake, Valeria.
He knows his duty better.
He must be dead, or Rome victorious.

Valeria. Thousands as well as I beheld the combat.
After his brother's death he stood alone,
And acted wonders against three assailants;
Till forc'd at last to save himself by flight——

Horatius. By flight! And did the soldiers let him pass?
Oh, I am ill again!—The coward villain!
[*Throwing himself into his chair.*

Horatia. Alas, my brothers!

Horatius. Weep not for them, girl.
They've died a death which kings themselves might envy;
And whilst they liv'd they saw their country free.
Oh, had I perish'd with them!——But for him
Whose impious flight dishonours all his race,

Tears a fond father's heart, and tamely barters
For poor precarious life his country's glory,
Weep, weep for him, and let me join my tears!

Valeria. What could he do, my lord, when three oppos'd him?

Horatius. Die!
"He might have died. Oh, villain, villain, villain!"
And he shall die; this arm shall sacrifice
The life he dar'd preserve with infamy.
[*Endeavouring to rise.*
What means this weakness? 'Tis untimely now,
When I should punish an ungrateful boy.
Was this his boasted virtue, which could charm
His cheated sovereign, and brought tears of joy
To my old eyes?—So young a hypocrite!
Oh, shame, shame, shame!

Valeria. Have patience, sir; all Rome
Beheld his valour, and approv'd his flight,
Against such opposition.

Horatius. Tell not me!
What's Rome to me? Rome may excuse her traitor;
But I'm the guardian of my house's honour,
And I will punish. Pray ye, lead me forth;
I would have air. But grant me strength, kind gods,
To do this act of justice, and I'll own,
Whate'er 'gainst Rome your awful wills decree,
You still are just and merciful to me. [Exeunt.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Room in HORATIUS's *House.* *Enter* HORATIUS, VALERIA *following.*

Horatius.

AWAY, away!—I feel my strength renew'd,
And I will hunt the villain thro' the world:
No deserts shall conceal, nor darkness hide him.
He is well skill'd in flight; but he shall find
'Tis not so easy to elude the vengeance
Of a wrong'd father's arm, as to escape
His adversary's sword.

Valeria. Restrain your rage
But for a moment, sir. When you shall hear
The whole unravell'd, you will find he's innocent.

Horatius. It cannot be.

Valeria. And see, my brother comes.
He may perhaps relate——

Horatius. I will not hear him;
I will not listen to my shame again.

Enter VALERIUS.

Valerius. I come with kind condolance from the king,
To sooth a father's grief, and to express——

Horatius. I've heard it all; I pray you spare my blushes.

I want not consolation; 'tis enough
They perish'd for their country. But the third——
Valerius. True, he indeed may well supply your loss,
And calls for all your fondness.
Horatius. All my vengeance:
And he shall have it, sir.
"*Valerius.* What means my lord?
"Are you alone displeas'd with what he has done?
"*Horatius.* 'Tis I alone, I find, must punish it."
Valerius. Vengeance!
"Punish," my lord! What fault has he committed?
Horatius. Why will you double my confusion thus?
Is flight no fault?
Valerius. In such a cause as his
'Twas glorious.
Horatius. Glorious! Oh, rare sophistry!
To find a way through infamy to glory!
Valerius. I scarce can trust my senses—Infamy!
What, was it infamous to save his country?
Is art a crime? Is it the name of flight
We can't forgive, though it's ador'd effect
Restor'd us all to freedom, fame, and empire?
Horatius. What fame, what freedom? Who has sav'd his country?
Valerius. Your son, my lord, has done it.
Horatius. How, when, where?
Valerius. Is't possible! Did not you say you knew?
Horatius. I care not what I knew—Oh, tell me all!
Is Rome still free?—Has Alba?—Has my son?——
Tell me———

Valerius. Your son, my lord, has slain her champions.

Horatius. What, Publius?

Valerius. Ay, Publius.

Horatius. Oh, let me clasp thee to me!
Were there not three remaining?

Valerius. True, there were;
But wounded all.

Horatius. Your sister here had told us
That Rome was vanquis'd, that my son was fled——

Valerius. And he did fly; but 'twas that flight preserv'd us.
All Rome as well as she has been deceiv'd.

Horatius. Let me again embrace thee—Come, relate it.
Did I not say, Valeria, that my boy
Must needs be dead, or Rome victorious?
I long to hear the manner—Well, Valerius—

Valerius. Your other sons, my lord, had paid the debt
They ow'd to Rome, and he alone remain'd
'Gainst three opponents, whose united strength,
Tho' wounded each, and robb'd of half their force,
Was still too great for his. A while he stood
Their fierce assaults, and then pretended flight
Only to tire his wounded adversaries.

Horatius. Pretended flight, and this succeeded, ha!
Oh, glorious boy!

Valerius 'Twas better still, my lord;
For all pursued, but not with equal speed.
Each, eager for the conquest, press'd to reach him;

Nor did the first, till 'twas too late, perceive
His fainter brothers panting far behind.

Horatius. He took them singly then? An easy conquest;
'Twas boy's play only.

Valerius. Never did I see
Such universal joy, as when the last
Sunk on the ground beneath Horatius' sword;
Who seem'd a while to parley as a friend,
And would have given him life, but Caius scorn'd it.

Valeria. Caius! Oh, poor Horatia!

Horatius. Peace, I charge thee.
Go, dress thy face in smiles, and bid thy friend
Wake to new transports. Let ambition fire her.
What is a lover lost? There's not a youth
In Rome but will adore her. Kings will seek
For her alliance now, and mightiest chiefs
Be honour'd by her smiles. Will they not, youth?

[*Exit* Valeria.

Valerius. Most sure, my lord, this day has added worth
To her whose merit was before unequall'd.

Horatius. How could I doubt his virtue!—Mighty gods!
This is true glory, to preserve his country,
And bid, by one brave act, the Horatian name
In fame's eternal volumes be enroll'd.
" Methinks already I behold his triumph.
" Rome gazes on him like a second founder;
" The wond'ring eye of childhood views with awe

" The new divinity; and trembling age
" Crowds eager on to bless him ere it dies!
" Ere long, perhaps, they will raise altars to him,
" And even with hymns and sacrifice adore
" The virtue I suspected!"—Gracious Heaven!
Where is he? Let me fly, and at his feet
Forget the father, and implore a pardon
For such injustice.

Valerius. " You may soon, my lord,
" In his embraces lose the fond remembrance
" Of your mistaken rage." The king, ere this,
Has from the field dispatch'd him; " he but staid
" Till he could send him home with some slight honours
" Of scatter'd wreaths, and grateful songs of praise.
" For till to-morrow he postpones the pomp
" Of solemn thanks, and sacrifice to Heaven
" For liberty restor'd." But hark! that shout
Which sounds from far, and seems the mingled voice
Of thousands, speaks him onward on his way.

Horatius. How my heart dances!—Yet I blush to meet him.
But I will on. Come, come, Horatia; leave
[*Calling at the door.*
Thy sorrow far behind, and let us fly
With open arms to greet our common glory. [*Exit.*

Enter HORATIA *and* VALERIA.

Horatia. Yes, I will go; this father's hard command

Shall be obey'd; and I will meet the conqueror,
But not in smiles.

Valerius. Oh, go not, gentle lady!
Might I advise——

Valeria. Your griefs are yet too fresh,
And may offend him. Do not, my Horatia.

Valerius. Indeed 'twere better to avoid his presence;
It will revive your sorrows, and recall——

Horatia. Sir, when I saw you last I was a woman,
The fool of nature, a fond prey to grief,
Made up of sighs and tears. But now my soul
Disdains the very thought of what I was;
'Tis grown too callous to be mov'd with toys.
Observe me well; am I not nobly chang'd?
From my sad eyes, or heaves my breast one groan?
No: for I doubt no longer. 'Tis not grief,
'Tis resolution now, and fix'd despair.

Valeria. My dear Horatia, you strike terrors thro' me;
What dreadful purpose hast thou form'd? Oh, speak!

Valerius. "Talk gently to her."—Hear me yet, sweet lady.
You must not go; whatever you resolve,
There is a sight will pierce you to the soul.

Horatia. What sight?

Valerius. Alas, I should be glad to hide it;
But it is——

Horatia. What?

Valerius. Your brother wears in triumph
The very scarf I bore to Curiatius.

Horatia. [*Wildly.*] Ye gods, I thank ye! 'tis with joy I hear it.
If I should falter now, that sight would rouse
My drooping rage, and swell the tempest louder.
——But soft; they may prevent me; my wild passion
Betrays my purpose.——I'll dissemble with them.
[*She sits down.*

Valerius. She softens now.

Valeria. How do you, my Horatia?

Horatia. Alas, my friend, 'tis madness which I utter——
Since you persuade me then, I will not go.
But leave me to myself; I would sit here;
Alone in silent sadness pour my tears,
And meditate on my unheard-of woes.

Valerius. [*To* Valeria.] 'Twere well to humour this. But may she not,
If left alone, do outrage on herself.

Valeria. I have prevented that; she has not near her
One instrument of death.

Valerius. Retire we then.
" But, Oh, not far, for now I feel my soul
" Still more perplex'd with love. Who knows, Valeria,
" But when this storm of grief has blown its fill,
" She may glow calm, and listen to my vows."
[*Exeunt* Valerius *and* Valeria.

After a short Silence, HORATIA *rises, and comes forward.*

Horatia. Yes, they are gone; and now be firm, my soul!

This way I can elude their search. The heart,
Which dotes like mine, must break to be at ease.
Just now I thought, had Curiatius liv'd,
I could have driven him from my breast for ever.
But death has cancell'd all my wrongs at once.
——They were not wrongs; 'twas virtue which undid us,
And virtue shall unite us in the grave.
I heard them say, as they departed hence,
That they had robb'd me of all means of death.
Vain thought! they knew not half Horatia's purpose.
Be resolute, my brother; let no weak
Unmanly fondness mingle with thy virtue,
And I will touch thee nearly. Oh, come on,
'Tis thou alone canst give Horatia peace. [*Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Street of Rome. Chorus of Youths and Virgins singing and scattering Branches of Oak, Flowers, &c. Then enters HORATIUS, *leaning on the Arm of* PUBLIUS HORATIUS.

CHORUS.

THUS, for freedom nobly won,
Rome her hasty tribute pours;
And on one victorious son
Half exhausts her blooming stores.

A YOUTH.

Scatter here the laurel crown,
Emblem of immortal praise!
Wondrous youth! to thy renown
Future times shall altars raise.

A VIRGIN.

Scatter here the myrtle wreath,
Though the bloodless victor's due;
Grateful thousands sav'd from death
Shall devote that wreath to you.

A YOUTH.

Scatter here the oaken bough;
Ev'n for one averted fate,
We that civic meed bestow——
He sav'd all who sav'd the state.

CHORUS.

Thus for freedom, *&c.*

Horatius. Thou dost forgive me then, my dearest boy,
I cannot tell thee half my ecstasy.
The day which gave thee first to my glad hopes
Was misery to this——I'm mad with transport!
Why are ye silent there? Again renew
Your songs of praise, and in a louder strain
Pour forth your joy, and tell the list'ning spheres
That Rome is freed by my Horatius' hand.

Pub. No more, my friends.——You must permit me, sir,
To contradict you here. Not but my soul,
Like yours, is open to the charms of praise:
There is no joy beyond it, when the mind
Of him who hears it can with honest pride
Confess it just, and listen to its music.
But now the toils I have sustain'd require
Their interval of rest, and every sense
Is deaf to pleasure——Let me leave you, friends;
We're near our home, and would be private now:
To-morrow we'll expect your kind attendance
To share our joys, and waft our thanks to Heaven.

As they are going off, HORATIA *rushes in.*

Horatia. Where is this mighty chief?
Horatius. My daughter's voice!
I bade her come; she has forgot her sorrows,
And is again my child.
Horatia. Is this the hero
That tramples nature's ties, and nobly soars
Above the dictates of humanity?
Let me observe him well.
Pub. What means my sister?
Horatia. Thy sister! I disclaim the impious title;
Base and inhuman! Give me back my husband,
My life, my soul, my murder'd Curiatius!
Pub. He perish'd for his country.
Horatia. Gracious gods!
Was't not enough that thou hadst murder'd him,

But thou must triumph in thy guilt, and wear
His bleeding spoils?—Oh, let me tear them from thee,
Drink the dear drops that issu'd from his wounds,
More dear to me than the whole tide that swells
With impious pride a hostile brother's heart.

Horatius. Am I awake, or is it all illusion!
Was it for this thou cam'st?

Pub. Horatia, hear me,
Yet I am calm, and can forgive thy folly;
Would I could call it by no harsher name.
But do not tempt me farther. Go, my sister,
Go hide thee from the world, nor let a Roman
Know with what insolence thou dar'st avow
Thy infamy, or what is more, my shame,
How tamely I forgave it.—Go, Horatia.

Horatia. I will not go.—What, have I touch'd thee, then?
And canst thou feel?—Oh, think not thou shalt lose
Thy share of anguish. I'll pursue thee still,
"Urge thee all day with thy unnatural crimes,
"Tear, harrow up thy breast; and then at night"
I'll be the fury that shall haunt thy dreams;
Wake thee with shrieks, and place before thy sight
Thy mangled friends in all their pomp of horror.

Pub. Away with her! 'tis womanish complaining.
Think'st thou such trifles can alarm the man
Whose noblest passion is his country's love?
"—Let it be thine, and learn to bear affliction."

Horatia. Curse on my country's love, the trick ye teach us

To make us slaves beneath the mask of virtue;
To rob us of each soft endearing sense,
And violate the first great law within us.
I scorn the impious passion.

Pub. Have a care;
Thou'st touch'd a string which may awake my vengeance.

Horatia. [*Aside.*] Then it shall "do it."

Pub. Oh, if thou dar'st prophane
That sacred tie which winds about my heart,
By Heaven I swear, by the great gods who rule
The fate of empires, 'tis not this fond weakness
Which hangs upon me, and retards my justice,
Nor even thy sex, which shall protect thee from me.
[*Clapping his hand on his sword.*

Horatius. Drag her away—thou'lt make me curse thee, girl——
Indeed she's mad. [*To* Publius.

Horatia. Stand off, I am not mad——
Nay, draw thy sword; I do defy thee, murderer,
Barbarian, Roman!——Mad! The name of Rome
Makes madmen of you all; my curses on it.
"I do detest its impious policy."
Rise, rise, ye states (Oh, that my voice could fire
Your tardy wrath!) confound its selfish greatness,
Rase its proud walls, and lay its towers in ashes!

Pub. I'll bear no more—— [*Drawing his sword.*

Horatius. Distraction!—Force her off——

Horatia. [*Struggling.*] Could I but prove the Helen to destroy

This curs'd unsocial state, I'd die with transport:
Gaze on the spreading fires—'till the last pile
Sunk in the blaze—then mingle with its ruins.

Pub. Thou shalt not live to that. [*Exit after her.*

Thus perish all the enemies of Rome. [*Without.*

Re-enter VALERIUS.

Valerius. Oh, horror! horror! execrable act;
If there be law in Rome; if there be justice,
By Rome, and all its gods, thou shalt not 'scape. [*Exit.*

Re-enter PUBLIUS, *followed by* HORATIA *wounded.*

Horatia. Now thou'st indeed been kind, and I forgive you
The death of Curiatius; this last blow
Has cancell'd all, and thou'rt again my brother.

Horatius. Heavens! what a sight!
A daughter bleeding by a brother's hand!
My child! my child!

Horatia. What means this tenderness? I thought to see you
Inflam'd with rage against a worthless wretch
Who has dishonour'd your illustrious race,
And stain'd its brightest fame: in pity look not
Thus kindly on me, for I have injur'd you.

Horatius. Thou hast not, girl;
I said 'twas madness, but he would not hear me.

Horatia. Oh, wrong him not; his act was noble justice,
I forc'd him to the deed; for know, my father,

It was not madness, but the firm result
Of settled reason, and deliberate thought.
I was resolv'd on death, and witness, Heaven,
I'd not have died by any hand but his,
For the whole round of fame his worth shall boast
Through future ages.

Horatius. What hast thou said? Wert thou so bent on death?
Was all thy rage dissembled?

Horatia. Alas, my father!
All but my love was false; what that inspir'd
I utter'd freely.
But for the rest, the curses which I pour'd
On heaven-defended Rome, were merely lures
To tempt his rage, and perfect my destruction.
Heaven! with what transport I beheld him mov'd!
How my heart leap'd to meet the welcome point,
Stain'd with the life-blood of my Curiatius,
Cementing thus our union ev'n in death.

Pub. My sister live! I charge thee live, Horatia!
Oh, thou hast planted daggers here.

Horatia. My brother!
Can you forgive me too! then I am happy.
I dar'd not hope for that! Ye gentle ghosts
That rove Elysium, hear the sacred sound!
My father and my brother both forgive me!
I have again their sanction on my love.
Oh, let me hasten to those happier climes,
Where, unmolested, we may share our joys,
Nor Rome, nor Alba, shall disturb us more. [*Dies.*

Horatius. 'Tis gone, the prop, the comfort of my age.
Let me reflect; this morn I had three children,
No happier father hail'd the sun's uprising:
Now, I have none, for, Publius, thou must die:
Blood calls for blood—to expiate one parricide,
Justice demands another—Art thou ready?

Pub. Strike! 'tis the consummation of my wishes
To die, and by your hand.

Horatius. Oh, blind old man!
Wouldst thou lift up thy sacrilegious hand
Against the chief, the god that sav'd thy country?
There's something in that face that awes my soul,
Like a divinity. Hence, thou vile weapon,
Disgrace my hand no more.
[*A cry without.*] Justice! Justice!
What noise is that?

Enter VOLSCINIUS.

Vols. All Rome, my lord, has taken the alarm, and crowds
Of citizens enrag'd, are posting hither,
To call for justice on the head of Publius.

Horatius. Ungrateful men! how dare they? Let them come.

Enter TULLUS, VALERIUS, *and Citizens.*

Valerius. See, fellow-citizens, see where she lies,
The bleeding victim.

Tullus. Stop, unmanner'd youth!

Think'st thou we know not wherefore we are here?
Seest thou yon drooping sire?

Horatius. Permit them, sir.

Tullus. What would you, Romans?

Valerius. We are come, dread sir,
In the behalf of murder'd innocence;
Murder'd by him, the man——

Horatius. Whose conquering arm
Has sav'd you all from ruin. Oh, shame! shame!
Has Rome no gratitude? Do ye not blush
To think whom your insatiate rage pursuses?
Down, down, and worship him.

1st Citizen. Does he plead for him?

2d Citizen. Does he forgive his daughter's death?

Horatius. He does,
And glories in it, glories in the thought
That there's one Roman left who dares be grateful;
If you are wrong'd, then what am I? Must I
Be taught my duty by th' affected tears
Of strangers to my blood? Had I been wrong'd,
I know a father's right, and had not ask'd
This ready-talking sir to bellow for me,
And mouth my wrongs in Rome.

Valerius. Friends, countrymen, regard not what he says;
Stop, stop your ears, nor hear a frantic father
Thus plead against his child.

Horatius. He does belie me.
What child have I? Alas! I have but one!
And him you would tear from me.

All Citizens. Hear him! hear him!

Pub. No; let me speak. Think'st thou, ungrateful youth,
To hurt my quiet? I am hurt beyond
Thy power to harm me. Death's extremest tortures
Were happiness to what I feel. Yet know,
My injur'd honour bids me live; nay, more,
It bids me even descend to plead for life.
But wherefore waste I words? 'Tis not to him,
But you, my countrymen, to you, I speak;
He lov'd the maid.

1st Citizen. How! lov'd her!

Pub. Fondly lov'd her;
And, under shew of public justice, screens
A private passion, and a mean revenge.
Think you I lov'd her not? High Heaven's my witness
How tenderly I lov'd her; and the pangs
I feel this moment, could you see my heart,
'Twould prove too plainly I am still her brother.

1st Citizen. He shall be sav'd.
Valerius has misled us.

All Citizens. Save him! save him!

Tullus. If yet a doubt remains,
Behold that virtuous father, who could boast
This very morn, a numerous progeny,
The dear supports of his declining age;
Then read the sad reverse with pitying eyes,
And tell your conscious hearts they fell for your.

Horatius. I am o'erpaid by that, nor claim I ought

On their accounts; by high Heaven, I swear,
I'd rather see him added to the heap,
Than Rome enslav'd.

1st. Citizen. Oh, excellent Horatius!

All Citizens. Save him! save him!

Tullus. Then I pronounce him free. And now, Horatius,
The evening of thy stormy day at last
Shall close in peace. Here, take him to thy breast.

Horatius. My son, my conqueror! 'twas a fatal stroke,
But shall not wound our peace. This kind embrace
Shall spread a sweet oblivion o'er our sorrows;
Or, if in after times, though 'tis not long
That I shall trouble you, some sad remembrance,
Should steal a sigh, and peevish age forget
Its resolution, only boldly say
Thou sav'dst the state, and I'll intreat forgiveness.

Learn hence, ye Romans, on how sure a base
The patriot builds his happiness;
Grief may to grief in endless round succeed,
And nature suffer when our children bleed;
But still superior must that hero prove,
Whose first, best passion, is his country's love.

[Exeunt omnes.

EPILOGUE.

LADIES, by me our courteous author sends
His compliments to all his female friends,
And thanks them from his soul for every bright
Indulgent tear which they have shed to-night.
Sorrow in virtue's cause proclaims a mind,
And gives to beauty graces more refin'd.
Oh, who could bear the loveliest form of art,
A cherub's face, without a feeling heart!
'Tis there alone, whatever charms we boast,
'Though men may flatter, and though men may toast,
'Tis there alone they find the joy sincere,
The wife, the parent, and the friend are there.
All else, the veriest rakes themselves must own,
Are but the paltry play-things of the town;
The painted clouds, which glittering tempt the chace,
Then melt in air, and mock the vain embrace.
Well then; the private virtues, 'tis confest,
Are the soft inmates of the female breast.
But then, they fill so full that crouded space,
That the poor public seldom finds a place.
And I suspect there's many a fair-one here,
Who pour'd her sorrows on Horatia's bier;
That still retains so much of flesh and blood,
She'd fairly hang the brother, if she could.

Why, ladies, to be sure, if that be all,
At your tribunal he must stand or fall.
Whate'er his country, or his sire decreed,
You are his judges now, and he must plead.
Like other culprit youths, he wanted grace;
But could have no self-interest in the case.
Had she been wife, or mistress, or a friend,
It might have answer'd some convenient end:
But a mere sister, whom he lov'd—to take
Her life away,—and for his country's sake!
Faith, ladies, you may pardon him; indeed
There's very little fear the crime should spread.
True patriots are but rare among the men,
And really might be useful now and then.
Then do not check, by your disapprobation,
A spirit which might rule the British nation,
And still might rule—would you but set the fashion.

THE

COUNTESS OF SALISBURY.

A

TRAGEDY,

By HALL HARTSON, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

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M DCC XCIII.

TO

ELIZABETH,

Countess of Moira.

MADAM,

THE attention you have vouchsafed to the Countess of Salisbury and the author, ever since they have had the honour of being known to your ladyship, persuades me that you will take pleasure in hearing it has been favourably received on the English theatre. Stript now of all stage decoration, and the assistance which it has hitherto received from the most animated performance, it is to undergo a stricter scrutiny, that of the closet; a scrutiny for which it is indeed but little provided. I know your ladyship will make a tender allowance for want of experience in the author, and such errors as are incident to human imperfection; but this is an indulgence, which I doubt the critic will not so readily show him. But however he may censure, I must ever think myself happy in having already acquired your ladyship's good opinion. I am also flattered, as often as I think of the near resemblance my heroine has of your ladyship. Had I been earlier honoured with your ladyship's acquaintance, I think I could have much

enlarged the character. And yet there are many virtues, many delicacies, which it would have been impossible for me to have preserved in the picture, of which those only can be truly sensible, who have the happiness of being acquainted with the original.

Please, madam, to accept the following attempt, as an offering of my gratitude for many favours; an imperfect indeed, but honest proof, of the esteem which is due from,

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's

Most respectful,

Most obliged,

Humble Servant,

H. HARTSON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE COUNTESS OF SALISBURY made her appearance about two years ago in Ireland, where she was received with very singular marks of favour; the author there had many friends, and with all the partiality they might be supposed to have for him, those friends did not hesitate to declare, that the excellent performance of *Mrs. Dancer* and *Mr. Barry*, contributed largely to the success of the piece:—written in his early youth, without having much knowledge of the stage, or dramatic performances, the author is sensible what his tragedy must be, notwithstanding the smiles with which it has been indulged. England, agreeably to the character of good nature and generosity which it has established through all the world, has kindly followed the example of its sister nation, and received with indulgence the attempt of a young writer, who is indeed ambitious of pleasing, but dares not aspire to excellence. He attributes, in a great measure, his good fortune now, to what his friends attributed it before, the animated performance of *Mrs. Dancer* and *Mr. Barry*:—It is theirs to endeavour to support a reputation already gained; his to aim at improvement, in order to acquire one.

THE COUNTESS OF SALISBURY.

THE author of this play is a gentleman, by name HALL HARTSON. An anecdote is told, the probability of which we are inclined to admit, that Dr. LELAND assisted in the composition. What induces us to think so, is the strange inequality of the composition. Some pages, not scenes, carry all that weighty exuberance of figurative diction that we catch from the study of Milton; elevation of thought, refined by platonism: others again retain the flattest puerilities of thought and expression.

Surely no understanding capable of producing much of this tragedy, would think it necessary to make the following rejoinder:

> But hear me, lady, hear a pious lesson,
> Which thy own lips to me have *oft* repeated;
> There is a power unseen, whose charge it is,
> With ever wakeful eye, to watch the good.

The sentences are frequently rendered uncouth, as well by distorted expression, as tumid affectation. Lady Salisbury, when demanded whether her lover should be made happy to-morrow, or the bright succeeding day, answers,——

> I know not; nor will I submit me or
> To promis'd league or tye.

The catastrophe of the piece produces the pleasure, which results from triumphant virtue.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. WESTON, in the Character of a Teague.

My jewels, I'm come to spake in the behalf——
Hoot, devil burn you all, you makes me laugh;
Upon my soul now, I don't take it well in you;—
Arra, be easy, till I'm after telling you:

Smit with the love of glory and of pelf,
To-night a bard, from Dublin its own self,
Has brought a play here for your approbation;
A very pretty thing, by my salvation.——
If you'll trust Irish evidence, I mean.—
I cann't the story very well explain:
But its about a countess and an earl;
The countess is a mighty honest girl.
But there's a villian with a damn'd cramp'd name,
Makes such proposhals—'tis a burning shame——
Another too—a knight—bekeys as why——
But hould you now, you'll see it by and bye;
And then 'tis time enough to tell the plot.——
Oh, but that's true,—I'd like to have forgot
The dresses:—'Pon my conscience, in my days
I never saw their peer,—they're all a blaze.
Then there's a child, the sweetest little rogue!——
Only excuse a trifling spice of brogue;——

He'll make you cry your eyes out, I'll be bound——
'Tis Ireland is the true poetic ground.
The Muses—Phœbus—heath'nish cant I loath!
What's Mount Parnassus to the Hill of Howth?
Or all the scenes each foolish poet paints——
Oh, bub-bub boo! give me the isle of saints.—
Turn up your noses—cavil now and carp——
Musha, I'm sure our emblem is the harp.
But stop!---the bell rings.——Fait they'll soon begin;
'Tis time for me to be a going in.
I take my lave, then——but dear craters mind—
Pray, to our Irish poetry be kind:
'Tis a new manufacture in effect;
And yours, my souls, t' encourage and protect.
No critic custom then exacted be;
Pass it, like Irish linen, duty free.

Dramatis Personæ.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

ALWIN, - - - - - - - - Mr. Smith.
RAYMOND, - - - - - - - Mr. Palmer.
GREY, - - - - - - - - - Mr. Aickin.
MORTON, - - - - - - - - Mr. Farren.
SIR ARDOLF, - - - - - - Mr. Packer.
LEROCHES, - - - - - - - Mr. Chaplin.
LORD WILLIAM, - - - - - Miss Heard.

Women.

ELEANOR, - - - - - - - Miss Kemble.
LADY SALISBURY, - - - - Mrs. Siddons.

Knights, Peasants, &c.

SCENE, *Salisbury Castle, and the Country about it.*

THE COUNTESS OF SALISBURY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Avenue leading to a Gothic Castle. Enter GREY *and First* Knight.

Grey.

A MESSENGER dispatch'd by Lady Salisbury!

Knt. And in the specious guise he wore, had pass'd
Unquestion'd; had not I in happy season
Approach'd, even as th' unwary centinels
Half op'd the gate. By threats o'eraw'd in part,
In part thro' hope of favour won, he own'd
At length, by whom employed, whither bent,
And for what purpose.

Grey. Say—

Knt. Strait to repair
To Marlborough; where now, as fame reports,
Our king resides, with all his peers; and there
To seek the Lord de Warren; to what end
This paper will, as I suppose, inform you—
I was about to bear it to Lord Raymond.

Grey. That care be mine. Henceforward it concerns
Us near, our vigilance be doubly firm. [*Exit* Knt.

[*Reads.*] 'The Countess of Salisbury, to her illus-
'trious friend, the Lord de Warren.
'I have lost my husband—Me and my lands Lord
'Raymond claims, as by royal grant assigned to him.
'He has banished my train, encompassed me with
'his creatures, and holds me a prisoner in my
'own castle. If the memory of thy noble friend be
'dear to thee, haste and rescue the afflicted

'ELA.'

How near was Raymond's hope, the beauteous hope
He tended with unceasing care, how near
My rising fortunes marr'd—I like not this:
Her, and her rich domains he would possess;
Yet in his breast there lives that kind of heart
Withholds him from the path that's nearest—He,
That would be great, must first be bold.
I hate those motley'd characters;
Something, I know not what, 'twixt good and ill,
Yet neither absolute; all good, all ill,
For me—That day, saith he, that happy day,
Which sees the countess mine, shall amply pay
Thy services: a doubtful balance this
Whereon my fortunes hang—This way he moves;
And, by his gait and gesture, ill at ease—
We must be firm;
My hopes demand it, and the time admits
No weak, no scrupulous delay—

Enter RAYMOND.

Ray. To sue,
But ever without grace to sue—oh Grey!
I am even weary of the vain pursuit.
Grey. It is, in truth, my lord, an irksome labour.
Ray. But now I cast me at the fair one's feet;
Pleaded my passion with whatever arts
Might best the gentle purpose aid; but she,
Instead of such return as I might hope,
Repaid me with an eye of cold contempt.
Of her late gallant lord she spoke; his merits
In opposition hateful placed to mine.
Urg'd then with recollection of her wrongs,
Like the loud torrent, with steep winter rains
O'ercharg'd, in all the loose, ungovern'd sway
Of wrath and indignation, she assail'd me.
Grey. And did my lord, in this unseemly fashion,
Hear all with equal temper? Wak'd he not
With such a peal—
Ray. Thou know'st not what it is
To love like me—Long time (for passion now
Had shed o'er all her charms a brighter glow,
That like Jove's daughter most she look'd, severe
In youthful beauty) long I lay, o'eraw'd
And silenc'd as by some superior being;
Till wak'd by pride, quick from the floor I sprung;
Warn'd her how she provok'd my power;
'Twas great, 'twas now within these walls supreme;
I long had gently woo'd her; but that love,
Tho' patient, would not always brook disdain.

Grey. 'Twas well and what ensu'd?

Ray. Silence at first,
Then tears; bright drops, like May-morn dews that fall
From the sweet blossom'd thorn. Back in her chair
She sunk—Oh! had you seen her then, dissolv'd
In all the soft, the lovely languishment
Of woe; while at her knee, with countenance
Most piteous stood her beauteous boy, and look'd
As if each tear, which from his mother fell,
Would force a passage to his little heart——
I fled; else had I kneel'd, and wept myself
As well as she.

Grey. O shame to manhood!—suits
Such weakness with our hopes?

Ray. She must, she must;
Yes, Grey, she must be mine—and yet—yet fain
Would I persuade the fair one, not compel.

Grey. Say to what purpose then was seiz'd her castle?
When she your suit rejected, then perforce
To claim her as the gift of royal favour!
To lord it here so long, and now to falter—
My lord, my lord, the mound is overleapt,
What now forbids but without further pause
To crop the rich, the golden fruits within?

Ray. Ungracious is the love reluctance yields;
And cold, cold even as marble is the maid,
Who comes unwilling to another's arms.

Grey. In brief, would you partake the lady's bed?

Ray. What means the question?

Grey. Look on that, my lord:
Better reluctant come, than not at all.

Ray. How came this to your hand?

Grey. By one whose cares
Of thee demand no trivial recompence.
His wakeful eye it was descry'd the bearer;
Else had the watch with all their vigilance
Prov'd insufficient.

Ray. My better angel interposed.

Grey. Had this it's purpos'd scope attain'd—my lord,
Were this but whisper'd in our Henry's ear—
He gave the royal nod, you say: true, he
Permitted, but thus far; that you should woo
The lady, and, her choice approving wed;
No more. By us the public ear is told
She hath approved: our artifice hath spread
The rumour; and with some it is receiv'd
That she is now your full-espoused consort:
But truth, my lord, long cannot rest conceal'd;
It will abroad, of that be sure, in spite
Of all our studied wiles.

Ray. What's to be done?

Grey. 'Tis critical; and must be manag'd nicely—
But see, with Eleanor the Countess comes;
And in her hand the young lord William. Here
Her custom is to walk: retire we now;
And thou observe the counsels of a friend.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter LADY SALISBURY, LORD WILLIAM, *and* ELEANOR.

Lady Sal. Talk'st thou of patience? What! the very roof,
That should protect and shelter me, become
My prison? Aw'd, and threatened, as I am,
By this intruder!—Cruel destiny!
Had I not more than common griefs before?

Ele. In evil hour thy hospitable gates
Were open'd to receive him.

Lady Sal. Unguarded that I was!—But who could then
Foresee the purpose of his coming.

Ele. Who
Can think even yet, that once repuls'd, he e'er
Would thus presume?

Lady Sal. Is there no succour then?
No generous hand to vindicate my wrongs?
Oh Salisbury! Salisbury! why, if yet thou liv'st—
Fond hope! he lives not, else with speed of thought
Would he repair to his afflicted Ela.

Ele. Why, dearest lady, will you yield you up
A prey to purpos'd sorrow? Time is fruitful;
And the next hour perhaps may bring thee comfort.

Lady Sal. Day after day I have watch'd the joyless hours:
Night after night, when some fleet courier sent
Before perchance, or letter fraught with sweet

Assurance of his safety might appear;
Five tedious moons have pass'd since first were told
The dismal tidings; no fleet courier sent
Before, alas! nor letter with such sweet
Assurance yet appears—He's gone! he's lost!
And I shall never, never see him more.

Ele. Ah! suffer not the leaden hand of cold
Despair thus weigh thee down; I yet have hope—

Lady Sal. Away with hope, away. No, no; full loud,
As I remember, and outrageous blew
The storm, that even the solid fabric shook
Of yonder walls; deep-rooted oaks gave way;
Churches and spires were overturn'd; nor even
The peasant's humble roof esscap'd that hour.
The fleet, save only one, one luckless ship,
Have all return'd; my lord nor hath been seen,
Alas! nor ever heard of since the storm.

Ele. Heaven visit her affliction, and bestow
That patience which she needs.

Lady Sal. No, Eleanor; no more shall he
To these deserted walls return. No more
Shall trophies, won by many a gallant deed,
Thro' the long hall in proud procession move;
No more fair Salisbury's battlements and towers
Re-echo to th' approaching trumpet's voice.
Never, oh! never more shall Ela run
With throbbing bosom at the well-known sound,
T'unlock his helmet, conquest-plum'd, to strip
The cuishes from his manly thigh, or snatch

Quick from his breast the plated armour, wont
T' oppose my fond embrace—Sweet times farewell.

Lord Wil. Mother, why do you speak so? you make me sad.

Lady Sal. It is too soon, my child, for thee to know
What sadness is.

Lord Wil. Will not my father come home soon? Eleanor told me he would: she would not tell a lye.

Lady Sal. No, love.

Lord Wil. Then he will come.

Lady Sal. Sweet innocence! I fear he will not.

Lord Wil. I hope he is not sick.

Lady Sal.—Go, lovely pratler, seek thy toys; go, go.

Lord Wil. I will, good mother; but don't be sad, or I shall be so too. [*Exit.*

Lady Sal. Sweet state of childhood! unallay'd with cares;
Serene as spring-tide morn, new-welcom'd up
With bleat of lamb, with note of woodlark wild.
With riper years come passions turbulent
And rude, a baleful crew, unnumber'd as
The forest leaves that strew the earth in autumn.
When happiness is round thee, when thou art on
The lap of downy ease, when thou art cherish'd
In the fair bosom of unruffl'd joy,
Comes a fell hand, dashes thee rudely down,
And leaves thee to despair.

Ele. Cease,
Cease, lady, to afflict thee: Raymond may,
I trust he will, e'er long retire, and give

Thee ease again—But hither comes his minion :
Much with his lord he can ; and, as he lists,
To purposes of good or ill o'er-rules
His mind : if he accost thee, speak him gently.

Enter GREY.

Grey. As you are fair above all other women,
So may you lend to that I would implore
A gracious ear.

Lady Sal. Without more preface, briefly speak thy suit.

Grey. To love, but ne'er to reap of love the sweet
Returns, is sure the worst of ills.

Lady Sal. And what of that?

Grey. Tho' love denied, yet pity may do much
To sooth the wound that pity gives—In brief,
Thou much-rever'd! my suit is in behalf of Raymond.

Lady Sal. Then I will spare us both some cost
Of words—In brief, I love him not, nor pity :
So tell thy lord—I would be private—hence.

Grey. Your words are brief indeed ; but of that kin
I dare not, must not bear my lord.

Lady Sal. Must not!

Grey. 'Tis cruel towards the man who loves so fondly.

Lady Sal. Doth he assume the specious name of love?
Love is a bright, a generous quality,
Heaven gave to noble minds ; pure and unmix'd
With every grosser stuff; a goodly flower,
Shoots up and blossoms in great souls alone

Grey. The mind, th' exalted soul thou nam'st, is his.
Lives there a youth more gentle of condition,
In fair accomplishments more grac'd, admir'd?
If beauty sway thy fond regards, if wealth,
I know not in fair England one with him
Can vie.

Lady Sal. Is then the star, the peerless star,
That late was gaz'd on, quite obscur'd? What tho'
He may have set, hath he not left a train
Of glory in the skies?—Th' illustrious name
Of Salisbury yet survives—If wealth—but mark me;
Were he of all the wealth possess'd from where
Th' East-Indian bids the sun good-morrow, to where
Th' Atlantic in her wide-extended lap
Receives him setting; could he in each hand
A thousand sceptres place, not all should bribe
Me to his bed—No, Salisbury! thou hast been
The husband of my early love; with thee,
That love was all interr'd; and when I pluck
It forth again, gape wide that earth wherein
Thou liest, quick snatch me from the light of Heaven,
And swallow me within her lowest prison!

Grey. For pity's sake yet soften; for, oh sure
No former love could ever equal his;
No bosom boast the generous flame wherewith
Lord Raymond glows for thee, admired fair!

Lady Sal. Hear this, ye Heavens, and grant me patience—Where's
My people? where the freedom that I late
Was blest with? Wherefore is my palace throng'd

With strangers? Why, why are my gates shut up
And fortified against their rightful mistress?

Grey. Madam———

Lady Sal. Is this the love he boasts?
Is this the fair accomplish'd, this the gentle youth?
Must I recall to mind—Came he not then
Even while the memory of my dear lov'd lord
Was green: while sorrow yet was in my eyes?
—Tears! ye will choke me—Came he not even then,
And broke in on my sorrows? Like a spoiler
He came, heap'd up the measure of my woes,
Added new anguish to th' afflicted heart,
And swell'd the current of the widow's tears.

Grey. Madam, were he that spoiler thou proclaim'st,
He need not now thus humbly sue for that
His power long since, unask'd might have extorted.

Lady Sal. Ha! what art thou that thus presum'st to threaten?
Extorted!—Hence thou rude one, bolder even
Than him who calls thee slave.

Grey. Madam, you speak
As though you knew me not.

Lady Sal. I know thee well—
To what concerns Lord Raymond I have spoke,
My final purpose fix'd:
For thee, I charge thee shun my presence; hence,
And learn the distance that befits thy calling.

Grey. Not ere I speak more fully to the cause—
Nay, lady, look not on me with so stern

An eye, but give me patient hearing—

Lady Sal. No more; I'll hear no more.

Grey. Nor hear me!—When next we meet—I will be heard. [*Exit.*

Lady Sal. What meant he, Eleanor?—I will be heard.

Ele. Alas! I know not: but a soul he hath,
Prompt and alert to acts of desperate thinking.
Hardly thou art beset; O lady, lend
An ear to what thy Eleanor would counsel.
When next he comes (for that he hath obtained
Of Raymond leave to woo thee to his will,
I know) assume a gentler carriage. Seem
As tho' you may hereafter to his suit
Incline. Be ruled: necessity oft lends
A sanction to deceit. Demand a pause:
My lord of Salisbury's fate yet unconfirm'd
Shall add thereto a seeming colour. Chance,
Mean time, that comes or soon or late to all,
To thee may come with unexpected succour.

Lady Sal. ——Sincerity,
Thou, spotless as the snowy-vested hill!
Forgive me, if, by lawless power constrain'd,
I turn this once from thy long-trodden path;
It must be so——
Oh, Salisbury! Salisbury! thou lamented shade;
Descend from those pure mansions, where thou sit'st
Exalted: hover o'er me: and, as thou
Wert wont, support me in this hour of trial.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Within the Castle. Enter RAYMOND *and* GREY.

Grey.

AWAY, my lord, away with every care;
The conflict's past, and fortune is our own—
Defeated once, again I sought the fair;
I sought her, and prevail'd.

Ray. By all the joys, the nameless joys, that on
The precious hour of soft compliance wait,
I will requite thee nobly. Say, for much
My wonder's mov'd, how hast thou found
Such grace? How wrought this change, thus sudden,
——thus,
Unhop'd from her late bearing?

Grey. Uncertain is the sex—but that imports not.
It now remains, that proof, such proof be sought
Of Salisbury's fate, as by minute detail
Of circumstances shall with the lady gain
Prompt cadence—Hear what I have devis'd, if you
Approve——

Enter a Knight.

Knt. My lord, two strangers I have brought,
Within the precincts of the castle found.

Ray. Say'st thou two strangers? of what quality?

Knt. With me they were of speech not over-prompt;
But by their outward guise they would seem men
As with some pious purpose charg'd. Severe
The younger seems, but of excelling form;

And wishes to recruit his wearied limbs
Beneath the friendly covert of this roof.
Ray. Conduct them to our presence— [*Exit* Knt.
I were loth,
The weary traveller to dismiss my gates,
Unhospitably rude; yet none I wish,
While we are yet suspended at the nod
Of peevish and uncertain chance, approach
These walls.

Re-enter Knight, *with* Strangers.

Whence, and what are you?
1st Stran. What we are,
These weeds, tho' we were silent, might unfold.
Alwin I am call'd, my fellow traveller
Leroches. Our way was bent for Canterbury,
With purpose of a pious vow: o'ertaken
By weariness from travel, and desire
Of food, we journey'd hither-ward, in hope
The lord of these fair turrets, first descry'd
At close of evening, might befriend our toils.
Ray. Whence have you come?
Alw. From France, not many days.
Ray. Say, what occasion may have called you hither?
Alw. To aid (Heaven prosper long) my country's weal.
Ray. You are a soldier then?
Alw. I have been such;
And to be such was my most dear inclining;
Smit with the love, even from my greenest youth,

Of honest arms. Some share of fame I too
Achiev'd—But ill the soldier it beseems
To trumpet his own praises.
Ray. Cease not so.
Tho' in the school of war untutor'd, much
It pleaseth me to hear the brave man's labours.
Alw. None but have heard how some time since was sent
To claim of Lewis certain lands usurp'd
A puissant force———
Ray. Were you therein employed?
Alw. Beneath the royal banner I enroll'd,
As was my bent, in quest of fame.
Ray. Indeed!—
Lord Salisbury then perchance of thee was known?
Alw. I knew him well; our Liege's near ally,
And second to duke Richard in command.
Fast by his side was my allotted post
Upon the marshal'd field: by him I fought,
For him had died.
Ray. Of him fame loudly speaks,
That in those wars he was a gallant man.
Alw. He was not wont, while others bravely fought,
To look unactive on.
Ler. A foe like him,
France never knew, of all that warrior host,
Which like an inundation England pour'd
On her affrighted shores—
Ray. But what
Have prov'd his latter fortunes I should wish

To learn—Say, courteous stranger, if thou can'st,
Of this renowned lord: a rumour hath
Long since prevail'd, that he on Gallia's coast
Was wreck'd with all his crew.

Alw. What cause there was
Of such report, alas! these eyes have seen;
How true in part it is, too sure this tongue
Can testify.

Ray. I pray you let us hear.

Alw. —O'ercharg'd with human prey, fell war had ceas'd
To walk his wasteful round; well pleas'd we turn
Us from the blood-stain'd field; exulting each
With some rich spoil, trophies by valiant dint
Of arms achiev'd. Forthwith the eager host
Embark.
And now the chalky clifts on Albion's coast
T' our straining view appear'd; th' exulting crew
With peals redoubled greet the well known shore—
Ill fated men! in vain the anxious dame
Oft mounts the high-rais'd tower, thence earnest looks
Haply if her wish'd-for lord may come; in vain
The pratling boy oft asks her of his sire,
That never, never shall return.

Ray. Proceed,
Good stranger—what was the event?

Alw. Anon
The winds began to shift—up rose a storm
And heav'd the bosom of the troubled deep:
On the swoln billows sits enthron'd grim death,

And shakes his fatal dart.—The fleet, which late
In such fair order sail'd, is now dispers'd.
Before the wind we drove, left to the mercy
Of the wild waves, and all-disposing Heaven—
Oh my lov'd friends! associates of my toils!
Rescu'd in vain from war's wide wasteful arm,
Here end your labours! here sweet life forsakes you!
For me, a slender plank, next to the hand
Of some good angel, bore me to the shore.
Of full five hundred gallant lives, which late
Embark'd, not one that fatal hour surviv'd—

Ray. Save only thee?

Alw. Save only me!

Ray. Speak, now secure, for nearly it concerns
My quiet—speak—was Salisbury of your crew?

Alw. Alas! too sure.

Ray. Enough—Thy courtesy
Of us may well, and shall be well requited.
Of this our friend accept mean time his prompt
Regards: anon we shall be glad to hold
Some farther converse with you.

[*Exit* Alw. Ler. *and* Knt.

Grey. Of this stranger
What thinks my lord?

Ray. As of an angel, sent
To waft me on his wings strait to the summit
Of all my wishes—With what a gallant grace
He bears him!—Much I wish to hear him speak
Again—to hear the battles he has fought,
And all the story of his life and fortunes.

Grey. That we shall learn hereafter: but 'tis meet
That he to Lady Salisbury first unfold
The sum of what he had reported.

Ray. Methinks
I now behold her, like some full-blown flower,
The fairest of the garden, late o'ercharg'd
With showers, her head declining sad, whilst he
Recounts the story of her Salisbury's fate.
Would she were mine without a tear;
Without a sigh.—But she must weep; she must;
Thereon my all depends—Oh wayward sorrow!
That wounds—yet wounding heals the lover.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Changes to an Apartment. LADY SALISBURY *reclining on a Couch. Enter* ELEANOR.

Ele. Grief, that of time's fix'd periods for repose
Takes small account, hath lull'd her wearied senses—
Where'er thou dwell'st, Oh Peace, with azure eyes
Serene; or if in stately-structur'd dome,
Or thatch'd-roof'd cottage low, or in cool grot
By fountain clean thou sit'st, or if perchance
Along the silver brook's green liveried verge
Reclin'd, approach thou rosy-dimpled fair;
Leave thy sweet haunts awhile; and with that balm
Which soothes the woe-struck heart, await her slumbers.

The hour approaches, when, as is her custom,
She seeks the hallowed shrine, and pious wakes
The voice of pure devotion to high Heaven:
I'll thither, and expect her—but she wakes——
How fares the mistress of my best regards?
Proved her slumbers sweet as were my wishes?

Lady Sal. Sweet, sweet, my Eleanor; so sweet, oh! would
I ne'er had wak'd. I dreamt, as wont on him
To dream, that I beheld his gracious form,
My bosom's lord: a while he stood, and seem'd
On me to smile; then flew to my embraces——
Ah fleeting ecstacy!—'twas but a dream.

Enter a Knight.

Knt. Thy favour, lady; I am charg'd with news,
That much imports thy hearing: summon up
Thy powers; two strangers late have come, of whom
One brings assured tidings of thy lord.

Lady Sal. ——My lord——what——speak——

Knt. He saith he knew my Lord
Of Salisbury well; that he was of his crew;
And with that peer embark'd from France.

Lady Sal. —But—well—from France.——

Knt. Lady, all must have
Their sorrows. Strait uprose a mighty tempest,
Dispers'd the fleet o'er all the seas——
The storm—the fatal wreck—of all
The stranger gives most circumstantial proof.

Ele. Alas the tidings!—Dearest lady, give

Thy sorrows vent; thy bosom's overfraught,
And will find ease by letting loose its woes.

Lady Sal. ——Well, well——
Then he is lost, and all, all is despair.
Tho' languid, yet was hope not quite extinct—
Where, where's the stranger? Seek him, haste, that I
May hear him fully speak of all. Methinks [*Exit* Knt.
'Twill be a desperate sort of soothing; to hang
Upon each sound, catch every circumstance
Of the sad story; and wring my aching heart
Till I am even surfeited with sorrow.

Ele. Behold, the stranger comes——

Enter ALWIN.

Lady Sal. Bear, bear me up, good Heaven!
That I may give full measure to my sorrow.

Alw. —Thy angel hover o'er thee, and support thee.
[*In an under voice.*

Lady Sal. ——The dead ere now
Have burst the prisons of the close pent grave,
And apparitions strange of faith appear'd;
Perhaps thou too art but a shadow; let
Me grasp thee, for, as I have life, I think——
It is, it is my Salisbury! O my lord!

Lord Sal. My bosom's joy!

Lady Sal. ——And dost thou live indeed?
Amazing Providence! He does! he does!
Look! look! behold him, Eleanor! behold
The gracious form! The vision was not vain.
[Ele. *goes aside.*

Lord Sal. —And art thou, art thou then—

Lady Sal. —O my full bosom!

Lord Sal. —The same, by time or circumstance unchang'd?

Lady Sal. Unhoped reverse!—Hence, hence all former woes—
My lord! my life! hence, hence, be swallow'd up
All griefs, and lost in this most blissful hour.

Lord Sal. Thou art, I see, thou art the same, thou must—
Thou hast not yielded to another lord?

Lady Sal. Another lord!—and could you, did you think
'Twas so?

Lord Sal. Thus spoke loud rumour on my way:
Indeed, I scarce could think it.

Lady Sal. Oh! 'twas foul!
Indeed thou should'st not think it——

Lord Sal. Ever dear!
No more; my soul is satisfied, and thinks
Of nothing now but happiness and thee.

Lady Sal. Say then, thou wanderer—Oh! I have much
Of thee to ask, thou much to hear: how is't
I see thee, see thee thus? Where hast thou been?
What secret region hath so long detain'd thee?

Lord Sal. O thou! whose image, ever in my view,
Sustain'd me angel like, against the rough
And rapid current of adversity;
Should I recount the story of my fortunes,

Each circumstance, beginning from that day
We parted, to this hour, thine ear would be
Fatigued; the stars, ere I had ended, cease
To twinkle; and the morning's sun break in
Upon th' unfinish'd tale; suffice it thee
To know the sum:
For England we embark'd, when, black and foul,
A tempest rising, quick upturnd the seas,
And cast me forth upon a hostile shore.
Why need I tell thee, love, how, in disguise,
On foot, alone, I've toil'd my weary way,
Thro' dreary vale, o'er mountain wild; my bed
Oft of the blasted heath, whilst o'er my limbs
Damp night hath shaken her cold, dewy wings,
And the chill northern gale hath spent his breath
On my defenceless head?
Thro' what variety of strange events
I've come, Heav'n-guided, to behold, once more,
My wife?—But, ah! my son! our only hope!
My boy! what, what of him?

Lady Sal. Dear to these eyes
As is the new-born light of Heav'n! he lives;
Is well—But say, my lord, what would thy coming,
Thus unattended, thus disguis'd?

Lord Sal. How I escap'd from hard captivity,
And Gallia's coast, more leisure shall inform you.
My friend, Sir Ardolph, had but just embrac'd me.
(The first glad transports of our meeting o'er)
When, with an honest tear, the good old man

In brief disclos'd what fame had now reported;
That thou wert soon, or had'st, ere this, espous'd
Earl Hubert's nephew, and sole purpos'd heir.——

Lady Sal. Oh, most unhallow'd, thus t' abuse
My unattainted love!——And could my lord——

Lord Sal. Yet hear me.—Strait I grasp'd my sword;
And, single as I was, had sallied forth,
Had not my friend's sage counsels interpos'd.
By Ardolf sway'd, I veil'd me as thou seest;
And, with a sharer in the dark intent,
Set forward on my way for Salisbury castle:
A simple hind's low cottage, not far hence,
Receiv'd us. Here, fast by the green wood side,
We lodg'd; resolv'd, ourselves unknown, to prove
What doubtful rumour only had proclaim'd.
With this intent, at dusk of evening we
Forsook the cot.———

Lady Sal. There needs no more:—Heaven saw
Me, and was touch'd with pity.——What a change
This hour!—Sequester'd as I was, even like
The votarist; perhaps the destin'd prey
Of rude desire.——

Lord Sal. O for to-morrow's slow returning night!

Lady Sal. Say, what of that, my lord?

Lord Sal. Revenge, revenge——
I'll tell thee:—Soon as dark usurping night,
Shall chace to-morrow's sun adown the skies,
Know, Ardolph, with a chosen troop of friends,
To that same cottage, arm'd, shall come——

Enter ELEANOR.

Ele. My lord, I hear th' approach of hasty steps.

Lord Sal Farewell, my best:
Nor peace nor sleep shall visit me, till I
Have given thee freedom, and reveng'd our wrongs.

Enter Knight.

Knt. Lord Raymond, sir, forthwith expects your coming.

Lord Sal. I will attend him.——Lady, fain would I
Have told thee less ungracious things; but all
Have their appointed trials. Learn to bear;
Convinc'd, the hand of Heaven, when it inflicts,
Prepares us oft for some superior good. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Within the Castle. Enter RAYMOND *and* GREY.

Raymond.

I SEE nor cause my joys to check; nor boast
As yet securely.

Grey. Think, that hope, the young,
The merry-minded fair, exalts us oft,
To make our fall the greater.

Ray. Why this cold,
This prudent maxim?

Grey. Mark the wary falcon:
Forward he shoots his piercing eye, and kens
The quarry from afar;—like his be thine.——
Perhaps, my lord, mine are but nicer fears,
Wak'd in a heart o'er anxious of thy welfare:—
Yet hath the younger of those strangers rais'd
In me suspicions of alarming hue,
Lest, underneath this honest guise, there lurk
Some subtle mischief. Lady Salisbury saw him:
Their conference, as 'twas long, so was it held
In secret——would we had been present.

Ray. Granting
Our presence had been seemly——wherefore spoke
You not this counsel ere they met?

Grey. I saw not then the danger.
His honest carriage, and the recent change
Within her mind, had lull'd each nicer fear.

Ray. 'Till now unmov'd, say what hath wak'd suspicion?

Grey. I know not well.—Would she were firmly thine,
Beyond the reach and grasp of wayward fortune.
The knight, whose office was to introduce
Him to the countess, he dismiss'd, ere they
Approach'd th' apartment.

Ray. Indeed!

Grey. This too—Is it not strange, though night, and this
Thy proffer'd roof, invited his sojourn;
He would not wait th' approach of morning?

Ray. Are they gone?

Grey. Amid the unguarded joy
Which held us, they escap'd, unheeded.

Enter Second Knight.

Knt. My lord,
Two strangers, it is said, in palmers weeds
Attired, have lodg'd since morning in a hut;
You may have mark'd it, in the darksome glen,
Near to the forest of wild oaks, just where
The stream white rushes down the shelving cliff.

Ray. Since morning, say'st thou?

Knt. Further I have learn'd;—
Their guise, as doth appear from certain words
O'erheard, is borrow'd with design to mask
Some secret purpose. [*Exit.*

Grey. It must be so:—
Their close-concerted arts have foil'd our caution.

Ray. They scarce have measur'd half the precincts yet;—
Send forth my knights, we will pursue them.

Grey. No:—One way there is, and only one——But hence;
I hear the countess——She loves Lord William well:
And much, much will a pious mother, sure,
To save an only son. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LADY SALISBURY *and* ELEANOR.

Lady Sal. In spite of this event, this blest event,
That hath restor'd the lord of this fond bosom,

Yet is my mind with doubts and fears disturb'd;
With images and wild conceits, of form
Unsightly; such as hover oft in dreams
About the curtains of the sick.——Alas!
Whilst others joy within the friendly roof,
Of night regardless, and the storm that beats
Without, he struggles hard; or he at best
To the dark shelter of the dripping wood.
Besides, what unknown perils may assail him,
Unaided thus, against whatever ill.——
Would he had waited the return of morn!

Ele. The night is dark indeed, the tempest high;
But hear me, lady, hear a pious lesson,
Which thy own lips to me have oft repeated:
There is a power unseen, whose charge it is,
With ever wakeful eye, to watch the good;
And peaceful ever is that breast, which trusts
In his angelic guard.—The hand
Of Heaven, that hitherto hath been his shield,
Will minister safe convoy to his steps,
Tho' night and darkness shed their thickest gloom.

Lady Sal. Misdeem not of my fears; or think I speak,
As over diffident of that same power
Thou nam'st, whose all surveying eye wakes ever;
Clear, unobstructed, either when the sun
Shrowds in night's shadowy veil, or when at noon
He shines reveal'd on his meridian throne.—
But where's the bosom throbs not, if it hopes?
Hope ever is attended with a train

Of wakeful doubts; and where the sweet nymph harbours,
There flutters also her pale sister, fear.——
But hence, as was our purpose, to the shrine;
Where, as is meet, for my dear lord restor'd,
I will, with grateful adoration———

Enter LORD WILLIAM.

Lord Will. Mother, I fain would know that stranger, who he is, that just now met me.

Lady Sal. And wherefore would'st thou know him, love?

Lord Wil. Gentle he was, and mild; not like those grim-fac'd ones I see here every day: and such kind things he did, as make me love him dearly.

Lady Sal. Say, what were they?

Lord Wil. He kiss'd me, strok'd my head, and patted me upon the cheek, and said———

Lady Sal. What said he, sweet?

Lord Wil. He said, 'Heaven bless thy beauteous head, sweet boy.'

Enter GREY.

Grey. Permit me, honour'd dame, I have a word
Or two, that claims thine ear.

Lady Sal. Then but a word;
My present cares ill brook long interruption.

Grey. Behold the blossom of the spring, how fair!
Yet in his velvet bosom lurks the worm,
And hourly wastes him of his choicest sweets;

Not less a foe is slow consuming grief
To beauty.——
You may remember, when we last conferr'd,
The gracious purport of your words to what
Concern'd Lord Raymond, when you taught his suit
To hope a prosperous issue; thus by me he speaks:
In the recesses of the hallow'd shrine,
Where with him stands the sable vested priest,
He waits thy coming; there with pious vows
Exchang'd, even now to consecrate thee his.—
May every rose-lip'd son of light look down,
And smile propitious on the joyful hour!

Lord Sal. Is this a season meet for such a theme?

Grey. For gracious acts all seasons should be meet;
Heaven shows the bright example; ever prompt
T' incline, when virtue lifts her suppliant eye.
But say, that for the present he forbore
His earnest suit, say, shall to-morrow make
Him happy? or to-morrow's night, perchance?
Or—what shall be the bright succeeding day?

Lady Sal. I know not;—nor will I submit me or
To promis'd league or tye; no, tho' thou should'st plead
Even with an angel's tongue.

Grey. You will not, lady!——
Know, then, this night, this hour must make thee his.

Lady Sal. This night! this hour!—Who'll make me his this hour?

Grey. A power, my lady, thou shalt learn to fear;

Force, force superior, that, with giant hand,
Plucks even the monarch from his throne—disrobes
The virgin of her honour; while distress
With streaming eyes and loose dishevell'd hair,
Hold forth her supplicating hands in vain.

Lady Sal. I know the monster thou would'st fright me with;
But I despise his power.——Hast thou ne'er heard?
Learn then of me a truth, a golden truth,
Grav'd on the registers of hoary time:
Virtue, with her own native strength upheld,
Can brave the shock of ruffian force, unmov'd
As is the rock, whose firm set base not all
The tumult of the western surge can shake,
Though the fierce winds uplift him to the stars.

Grey. This is a truth indeed may hold a place
On fancy's tinsel page:—What will avail
Thy virtue's boasted powers, when thou shalt see
Torn from thy feeble arms all thou holdest dear?—
Yes, lady, thy Lord William, thy lov'd son!

Lady Sal. Ha!—Save him, Heaven! He dare not sure——and yet——

Grey. Think, lady, think upon thy son.

Lady Sal. Protect
Him, O ye powers celestial!——angels watch
His steps, and hover round his harmless head!

Grey. Say, will you to the altar, lady?

Lady Sal. Sooner to my grave.

Grey. Thy obstinacy on his head.——Who waits?

Enter a Ruffian.

Lady Sal. What would'st thou here? Hence, execrable wretch!
Thou mak'st my blood run cold.
Lord Wil. Oh, mother, I am frighten'd.
Lady Sal. Dearest lamb!——
Hast thou no terrors for thyself?—Oh, Salisbury!—
Hast thou no fears?——Oh, I could tell thee what,
Like thunder, would appal thy hearing,—shrink
Up every nerve within thy blasted frame,
And make thee nothing.——Fear not, love.
Grey. Think not
With empty sounds to shake our purpose, say,
Will you comply?
Lady Sal. My little innocent!
Thou dar'st not, fell as is thy nature.——My love!
My life!
Grey. Convey Lord William hence.
Lord Wil. Oh, save me, mother, save me!
Lady Sal. Forbear your impious hands, forbear.
Grey. Or to the altar, or by all therein
I swear, this moment wrests him from thy view.
Lady Sal. Inhuman that thou art, can nothing move
Thee?—Oh! those little harmless looks would preach
Even to the hungry lion, make him pause,
And turn his rage to pity.
Grey. Nay, madam——

Lady Sal. Forbear, and I will go.——Whither? Distraction! I will rouse
The castle.—Help!—My cries shall tear the roofs.
Help, help, Oh, help!—the mother and the son!

Grey. Your cries are vain.———

Enter LORD SALISBURY.

Lord Sal. Hold!—What is't ye do?

Grey. He here again!

Lord Sal. Speak, lady, would these men have wrong'd thee?
Pale fear is on thy cheek.

[Ele. *removes Lord* Will. *Exit* Grey *and* Ruf.

Lady Sal. Cold horror hath o'ercome me.

Lord Sal. Ever lov'd!
Sure thou wert sore distress'd, I heard thee cry.

Lady Sal. Ah, sore distress'd indeed! the hand of peril
Was on me; violence and murder star'd
Me full in all their hideous forms!

Lord Sal. Gracious powers! my fear, my fear, new-wak'd;
For thee it was, as Heaven decreed, that urg'd
Me back, and brought me to thy timely rescue.

Lady Sal. 'Twas Heaven indeed that brought thee hither now!
Yet I have wondrous fears:—thou art but one,
Surrounded by a legion of those fiends.

Enter RAYMOND, GREY, *and armed* Knights.

Ray. [*As he enters.*] Where is the audacious man
that hath presum'd
To question with such bold intrusion?
Lord Sal. If him you mean,
Who took the part of feeble innocence
Against the ruffian's arm,—he's here.
Ray. Which of you, slaves, have suffer'd him to
enter?
Knt. My lord, he bad us to unbar the gates,
Driven by the tempest, as he said, to seek
The proffer'd shelter he had late declin'd:
Pardon, if, deeming him your honoured guest,
We answer'd him with prompt compliance.
Ray. Say what dark purpose is't hath brought thee
hither?
Confess thee true, or by the blessed Saints
Thou shalt have cause to mourn the hour which mov'd
Thee, daring as thou art, t' approach our castle.
Lord Sal. To other regions, other climes with threats
Like these, where proud oppression lords it: here
The free-born subject knows not what it is
To be in awe of arbitrary power.
Ray. I will know what thou art.
Lord Sal. Even what thou seest
Am I; a man not prompt to offer wrong,
Yet of that frame, I brook not to behold
A noble lady made the prey of ruffians.

Ray. Intruder, bold as thou art officious, wherefore
Should'st thou concern thee in this lady's cause?

Lord Sal. The cause of innocence should be the cause
Of all—Confess thee, lord, was't nobly done,
To let those bold, those rude assailants loose,
And give a sanction to such foul proceedings?

Ray. Pilgrim, hast thou forgot thee? Who am I?

Lord Sal. Who art thou! Ask, ask thy deeds,
And they will answer. The breath of Fame hath told
How base they have been; they are gone abroad,
And the pure air is tainted with their foulness.

Ray. Presuming slave! whoe'er thou art, for thy
Unlicenc'd bearing dearly shalt thou answer.
Hence with the bold defamer; bind him fast;
Be instant death his lot should he resist—
Seize him, I say.

Lady Sal. Oh! spare him, spare—

Lord Sal. Out, servile ministers!
Ye know not who it is ye would attempt—
Oppressive lord! whom nor the sacred bond
Of justice, nor of hospitality
Controls, regard me: while with sight
More dire than e'er of Gorgon feign'd, I strike thee—
Now, Raymond, if thou hast of noble fire
One spark within thee, draw thy sword; come on,
And meet my arm; wake all that's man within thee.
Come on—— [*Flings of his disguise.*
'Tis Sal'sbury, Sal'sbury, calls thee to the strife.

Lady Sal. Heaven shield my dearest lord!

Ray. ——Salisbury! then what am I?—

Lord Sal. Vengeance at length is arm'd; thy fate cries out,
And honour—injured honour, claims aloud
Her victim.

Ray. —Secure thou seem'st of fate, but fall who will
A victim, let the sword— [*Drawing.*

Grey. What would you do?—
[*Aside, holding his arm.*
Look not to know him, all may yet be well—
Be not abus'd, my lord: this is a plot,
Devis'd with purpose to effect thy ruin.

Lord Sal. Ha! what do'st say?

Grey. Believe him not, my lord. He!—he Lord Salisbury!
'Tis all a trick, an artful cheat, and he
A liar trac'd—

Lord Sal. Nay then my sword—
—Dishonest knights!
[*Going to attack* Ray. *he is disarmed.*

Lady Sal. Now by these tears do him no violence;
He is, he is my husband.

Grey. Regard her not:
He hath conspir'd against thee, and demands
The hand of justice.

Lord Sal. Will ye not ope, ye Heavens, and instant send
Your thunder to my aid?—Unhand me, villains,
Or, by the powers of vengeance, I will dash
You piece-meal.

Ray. Bear the traitor hence, and bind

His stubborn arms: bestow the lady safe
Within her chamber.

Lady Sal. I will not part my husband—Hold your hands—
They overpower me—Barbarous, barbarous men!

Lord Sal. Ruffians forbear your more than impious hands.

Lady Sal. Yet hear me, Raymond—by these streaming eyes,
Oh! hear me yet—

Ray. Away—

Lord Sal. Slaves! murderers!

[*They are forced off severally.*

Ray. Away with him, away—honour is lost,
And shame must henceforth be my only portion.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter RAYMOND *and* GREY.

Grey.

My lord, you waste the precious hours in cold
Irresolute delays: nor circumstance
Nor time admit of long deliberation.

Ray. —Would I had never seen this fatal mansion!

Grey. A sorry wish, my lord.—Behold the fierce,
The lordly ranger of the desart wild;
No sluggish fear he knows; he pauses not,
Nor looks behind, but onward speeds him till

He gripes the trembling prey: be ever thus
The youth, whom thirst of love and beauty fires.

Ray. —Away; call forth my train—nay murmur not:
Command that, ere the lark proclaim the morn,
They hold them each prepar'd. Here I will rest,
If rest I can, this night; to-morrow's sun
Shall see me fled for ever from these walls.

Grey. ——Go——I detain thee not.
Summon thy train, mount the swift steed, away;
The gates shall open to thy flight.—But know,
That shame and scorn shall follow at thy heels.
Yet worse; the insulted baron next pursues thee:
Nor rocks, nor mountains, nor opposing seas
Shall stay him; but with more than mortal rage
He shall assail thee;

Ray. —Are there no other means?

Grey. None.

Ray. No other way but murder? Horrid thought!—
Oh! Grey, if ere the dagger's drawn I feel
Such perturbation here!—what then, oh what
Shall prove my portion when 'tis steep'd in blood?
The drops can from the point be wip'd away,
But never from the mind.

Grey. Lift, lift thine eye,
And let it gaze upon the bright reward.
Riches and honours grace the swelling act,
While beauty, like the ruby-crowned morn,
When first she 'pears upon the mountain top,
Comes smiling on to meet you. These are objects,

My lord, would irritate the palsied arm
Itself of fear; excite the lagging blood,
And spur it on to acts of noble daring.

Ray. What would you do?—Think—Salisbury is a name
Of all beloved, of more than vulgar sway
Throughout the land; a deed unauthoris'd
As this shall never 'scape the arm of justice.

Grey. Such wary counsels shall our steps o'er-rule
As may deride suspicion—One there is,
A knight among thy vassal train, perhaps
Unnoted: soft of speech he is, and fair;
But of a heart that mocks at human feelings:
Him I have sounded with reserve; and find
Him not unapt to this our secret purpose.—
But say, what recompence, what high reward
Awaits the man, whose arm for thee enacts
Such signal service?

Ray. Half my fortunes—all
Would I on him bestow, whose prosperous arts
Should make the fair one mine.

Grey She shall be thine.

Ray. But say, my friend, what tale—what rare device
Should fruitful art explore that might amuse
Her just suspicions?

Grey. Innocence—the mask
Of innocence, and counterfeited sorrow——

Enter ELEANOR.

Ele. If beauty in distress, if dignity
Now sinking into ruin can assail

Thy pity, come, oh! come, and weep to see——

Grey. The countess, I suppose.

Ele. My lord, my lord,

'Twould melt the savage into human softness,
And make him howl forth pity to behold her——
Oh! did you see her, pale, disorder'd as
She runs, now calling wildly on her lord,
Again upon her son, again on thee.
Sometimes, alas! she beats her beauteous bosom;
Anon in frantic mood tears from her head
The silken hairs, which fall in heaps unheeded;
Wrings her white hands, and weeps and raves by turns,
Till nature spent and wearied gives her pause.

Ray. Away—we will speak comfort to her sorrows.

[*Exit* Eleanor.

—Wretch that I am!—But I will yield them up;
Son, husband—all I will resign, if so
I may appease her phrenzy.

[*Going, is detain'd by* Grey.

Grey. Be not rash.
Short is the date of every stronger passion;
Unstay'd the mind of woman; by a breath
Oft agitated, by a breath compos'd—
Yield them, my lord! it would be madness, ruin.

Ray. Which ever way I turn, it is destruction.

Grey. O'ercast with fear, thine eye takes nothing in
But fancies of the sickliest hue—For shame,
Rouse, rouse, my noble lord; awake, shake off

SCENE II.

discovers LORD SALISBURY *on the Ground, in Chains. Enter* LEROCHES.

Alas! on the cold ground! I fear his wrongs
ade him mad; I heard him rage—My lord—
se, my lord, and speak to thy Leroches.
Sal. —Thou art unkind.
Oh! would to Heaven that I could ease thy
troubles!
Sal. I had in sweet oblivion lost myself
every care; why hast thou call'd me back
ha'ed recollection?—O! my wrongs,
rongs! they now come rushing o'er my head—
in, again, they wake me into madness.
r. Thy wrongs shall be reveng'd.
d Sal. Torn from them both!
—Let me not think.
Ler. Think on our friends, my lord:
haps even now they are at hand; and soon
ll thunder at the gates.
Lord Sal. Is't possible?
do my eyes but false persuade me to it?—
trammels! and within my walls! beneath
hat roof where I am sole-invested lord!—
Ler. Look, behold.
Lord Sal. I see; thou are dishonour'd.
Ler. 'Tis the will
Of Heaven, and I submit me to my fortunes.

Lord Sal. How cam'st thou hither?
Ler. By command, as I
Suppose, of—but I will not name him.
Lord Sal. Blasts
Upon him!—Didst thou see my wife?
Ler. No, my lord.
Lord Sal. Nor my son?
Ler. My lord I saw not either.
Lord Sal. Nor of either heard?
Ler. No, my good lord;—I trust that they are safe.
Lord Sal. Hear me, sweet Heaven! ye throned powers above,
Dread arbiters of mortal doings, hear—
Dry not instant up the springs of life,
But grant me measure of revenge. Unbind,
For pity these dishonour'd limbs unbind,
And give this monster to my willing arm:
If I not firmly gripe, if I not tear
With more than savage force his hated form—

Enter a Knight.

Traitor!
What hast thou done? Bring forth my honour'd dame—
Haste, bring her instant; give her to my arms,
Uninjur'd, undefil'd, or, by the souls
Of the most holy and unspotted saints——
Spare me, good Heaven—I am, I am to blame.
Imports thy coming aught with me?
Knight. Behold
In me thy better angel, come to warn

Thee of unguarded danger—Oh! my lord,
My lord! beware of horrid treachery—
Whatever knight thou not'st, that, traitor like,
Approacheth thee with smiles; that, with the charm
Of honey'd speech, would practice on thy hearing,
Of him beware—They seek thy ruin; chance
Betray'd their purpose; I was touch'd with pity.
[*Going.*

Lord Sal. Nay, go not yet.

Knt. Suspicion's on the watch;
My thoughts are scarce my own.

Lord Sal. It is for guilt,
Not conscious honesty, to taste of fear.

Knt. Know then, my lord, tho' strict necessity
Enrolls me in the list of Raymond's train,
Yet doth my soul abhor the unhallow'd service.

Lord Sal. Be thou but faithful and discover all
Thou know'st, so shalt thou thrive in Salisbury's favour.

Knt. Fear not my faith. But shall Lord Salisbury prove
A friend indeed? For I shall need thy arm
And interest both against so great a foe.

Lord Sal. Now by my honour, ever yet held dear,
I will protect thee, 'gainst whatever foe.

Knt. Morton desires but this—Know then, that late
As by the western porch I stood, my ear
Was met by certain voices: strait I turn'd;
And thro' the crevice of th' adjoining door
Was known that same insidious knight and Grey,

In low, but earnest converse. Thee they nam'd:
And I could hear the latter, whilst he said,
'A dagger is the best. With honest smiles,
'And fair-instructed speech you must essay him.
'Thy peace and fortunes on this feat depend.'

Lord Sal. I thank thee for this warning; and ere long
Shall recompense thy love.

Mor. Had I the power
To serve thee, as the will, thou should'st not wear
Those marks of shame——But oh! the unhappy Countess!

Lord Sal. What, what of her?

Mor. Alas! to think the pangs
She feels this moment, torn as she hath been
By rude barbarians from her lord and son.

Lord Sal. But is she safe? Hath not dishonour reach'd her?

Mor. Oh may she never know dishonour!—Yet
Lord Raymond——

Lord Sal. Perish the detested name
For ever! for it makes my blood outcourse
The wholesome speed of nature.

Mor. It is true,
He holds her in his power—

Lord Sal. He does, he does:
And I do live to know it!

Mor. But I trust
He will not use that power—Farewell, my lord;
I will away, and gather all I can
Of their condition.

Lord Sal. Thou shalt win my love.
See, see my wife, oh! see her if thou can'st:
Speak comfort to her. Say the only pangs I feel
Are for her safety. Bid her hope for timely aid;
But to remember still, the virtuous mind
Will welcome death itself before dishonour.
Mor. To see her, is a task I fear will foil
My utmost; but no art shall be untried. [*Exit* Mor.
Lord Sal. Is there no way to freedom?—Oh my friends!
My friends! Haste, Ardolf, haste to my revenge.
Ler. Thy fierce impatience, thy untoward will
It is, my lord, that hath betray'd our safeties.
To Ardolf deaf, thou would'st not wait his succours;
Deaf too to me, thou would'st approach the castle.
Lord Sal. Fear not: this stranger, like Heav'n's brighter star,
Hath risen propitious—Heav'ns! but what of that?
My wife!—perhaps even now within the gripe
Of fell incontinence she struggles—Beware
That thought—down, down, or I shall rage to madness.
Ler. My lord, he would not——
Lord Sal. Hark!—
Ler. He would not, dare not, sure: or if he dare,
Her inborn dignity, her virtue—
Lord Sal. Peace!—
Lady Sal. Hold off your brutal hands! [*From without.*

Lord Sal. 'Tis she! 'tis she!
The slave assails her—Let me forth——
Slaves! murderers! instant let me forth, or I——
Lady Sal. Hast thou no touch of pity?
Lord Sal. Horror! horror!
Out hair! out by the roots! nor let a grain
Be left to tell there grew such honours there.
Lady Sal. O, my lord! my lord!——
Lord Sal. By Heav'n I will not be restrained——
[Ler. *strives to stay him.*
Nor all your bolts, nor barriers, all the powers
Of hell united shall withhold me from her——
Ler. Preserve him, Heaven! I fear
Some act of horrid import——Oh! she comes!
Wild, wild as the rough ocean vex'd with storms.
[*Bursts forth.*

Enter LADY SALISBURY, ELEANOR, *and* MORTON,

Lady Sal. I will have vengeance. Such an outrage—No,
I will not weep. They think I have no means:
'Tis false: I will resume a spirit.
Ele. Alas! alas!
Lady Sal. I had a son: sweet William!—thou hast heard
Him prattle: there was music on his tongue.
Ele. Can Heav'n behold such crimes, and not awake
It's thunders?
Lady Sal. Weep'st thou? I can weep myself;

I have some cause——He is my husband—who
Will part us?—Cold, cold, cold. The rains beat sore,
And the winds make a noise; 'tis a rough night;
No little star to guide his darkling steps——
The Heavens do rain down pity for me.

Ele. Rave
Not thus, dear lady; oh! be comforted.

Lady Sal. Yes, yes; I know: these trifles have disturb'd me.
The bird is rifled.
Poor flutterer! oh! it was nought to spoil
Her of her little hope—— Did'st thou not see
Her valiant mate, how fierce he shook his plumes,
And peck'd at them? Did he not?——He had sav'd
His mistress from the spoilers, but they snar'd him.

Lord Sal. [*Entering.*] Where is the slave? I will not brook delay.

Lady Sal. He's come! he's come——Now ruffians, I have found
Him, we will die together ere you part us.

Lord Sal. Hell! what are your blackest horrors to this?

Lady Sal. We will have justice—Bury Grey alive.

Lord Sal. She's lost!

Lady Sal. Say you!—Put Raymond to the torture.

Lord Sal. I will tear him joint by joint.

Lady Sal. But they will part us——
They come—You shall not—no; no power on earth
Shall force me—Now they pull—Hold, hold, my lord—
Yet closer——now, now, now.

Lord Sal. My wife, my Ela!
Lost as thou art, oh! do not leave me.
Mor. Distressful sight! Oh, most inhuman Grey!
Ele. Nature, my lord, unequal to the conflict,
Has for a space retir'd within herself;
But shortly to return. This interval
Of death-like quiet will, I trust, recall
Her safer senses——She revives.
Lady Sal. But this is strange——
Ele. My lord,
Speak to her; sooth her, and she will be calm.
Lord Sal. Speak to her, sooth her——what have I
with her? with thee?
Oh agonizing hour! Had I but perish'd
In the safe wave that buried my lov'd friends,
It had been well—'Twas cruelty to save me.
Lady Sal. Am I indeed awake?—Let me stand up—
What is the matter?
Lord Sal. My poor, injur'd wife!
Lady Sal. Nay, but inform me, I am overdoubtful;
I would believe, I know—if what I now
Behold, be not a dream, you are my husband?
Lord Sal. The wretch that was so call'd.
Lady Sal. Alack! alack!
Sure I have been afflicted sore—My lord!
My life!—why dost thou start from me? Oh take
Me to thy arms, for I have need of comfort!
Lord Sal. Art thou not undone?
Lady Sal. Indeed I have wept.
Lord Sal. Lost, stain'd, dishonour'd by a villain?

Lady Sal. How
My lord! Think'st thou that I have other wrongs
To weep than thou hast seen?

Lord Sal. I heard thee cry.

Lady Sal. I know not what I did—Dishonoured!—O!
The thought wakes every pulse to indignation.

Lord Sal. What! did he not assail thee?

Lady Sal. No—Assail me!

Lord Sal. Then thou art safe, thy honour unassay'd?

Lady Sal. So witness Heaven!

Lord Sal. The God of Heaven be prais'd!

Lady Sal. —And could'st thou think so meanly of me?—Oh!
I had let the life-blood from this bosom forth
Ere I had brook'd dishonour.

Lord Sal. Best of thy sex—Thy cries like daggers pierc'd me:
And fearful fancy pictur'd such a scene
As hurried me to madness—But thou art safe,
My wife is safe! and I am blest again.

Lady Sal. My heart o'erjoys—Then wherefore do I fear?

Lord Sal. I had forgot—our son; for him thou fear'st?

Lady Sal. Not only for my son, but for thyself,
Thy precious self I trembl'd—Oh, this fiend!
The slaves and agents of destruction, black
And bold, are station'd round him, and but wait
Their master's nod.

Ler. Would we were safe bestow'd
Without this fearful prison!
Lady Sal. Would we were!—
Think, think, my lord, is there no way of flight?
Lord Sal. Thou hast recall'd to my remembrance what,
If seconded by this our plighted friend,
May claim a serious and attentive hearing.
Mor. Small is the service I can boast my lord;
In all my best I shall be prompt to aid you.
Lord Sal. Hear then.—Deep underneath this vaulted ground,
Curious and close, by our forefathers scoop'd,
I do remember me there is a dark
And secret mine, which leads by many a maze
Without the castle.—Not far thence there stands,
Within the bosom of an aged grove,
An house for pious uses set apart,
The hallow'd seat of godly brethren: there
I fear not we shall rest secure of ill.
Lady Sal. Most opportune as could our wishes frame—
But oh! our little hope! our younger care!
Mor. My life shall answer for Lord William's safety.
Lady Sal. Then let us forth.
Mor. The night is over young;
The castle's yet awake, and would but mock
The attempt.
Lord Sal. Say, what shall be the appointed hour.

Mor. Some three hours hence, my lord; or ere the clock
Perchance have told the second watch—And now
That squint suspicion mar not, let us part.
Lady Sal. Then must we part?—But 'tis to save us all.
Three hours—farewell!—Oh! they will be three long,
Long hours to me!
Lord Sal. Farewell my best!—Mean time,
Leroches, we will rest us here apart.—Farewell,
Farewell! thou soother sweet of every care!
The God, that loves the unsullied mind, descend,
And be thy guardian till we meet again! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Forest and Cottage. Enter ARDOLF *and a* Knight.

Ardolf.

THE storm is laid; and from the parting clouds
See where the moon steps forth, pale goddess,
Chearing the dark, dull brow of hagard night.—
This is the forest—that the cottager's,
Or I do err, th' appointed place of meeting.
Knt. It is; behold the rock, as was describ'd,
The torrent foaming down his rugged side.
Ard. See, the bright harbinger of morning climbs
The steep of Heaven: they're in the first repose—
Wake, peasant, wake—How balmy sweet the sleep
Of him, who stretches under rustic roof!

His task of labour o'er, content he lays
Him on his rushy couch; nor elves, nor goblins,
(The coinage of swoln surfeit or of guilt)
Approach his peaceful pillow.—Wake, I say:
Peasant, awake.

Enter a Peasant *from the Cottage.*

Pea. Who calls?
What is your business, that at this late hour
You make the forest echo with your cries?
Ard. Peasant, are there not certain travellers
Within thy cottage?
Pea. No.
Ard. What! saw you not
Two stranger pilgrims pass this way?
Pea. I did.
Two such arrived ere the lark had risen
From her moss cabin, or the cock
Gave note of morn.
Ard. Say, gentle cottager,
Where may they now be lodg'd?
Pea. Nay, stranger, that
I know not. They went hence about the time
The bat began her twilight play.
Ard. 'Tis strange
They should depart—Left they no message?
Pea. None.——
They said, they wish'd to see the neighbouring abbey;
But would to-night partake our homely fare.
[*Returns into the Cottage.*

Ard. We now are in the precincts of the castle;
But whether to proceed, or wait, perchance
If they return, I know not.—Hark! some one
Approaches—who is there?

Enter LEROCHES.

Leroches!

Ler. Happily met—where are your friends?

Ard. At hand; and well appointed each—where is my lord?

Ler. In chains: in his own castle basely bound——
Torn from his wife and son.—How I escap'd—
But haste; time is too precious now for more:
His life hangs upon each eventful moment.

Ard. In chains! his life in danger!—Ho! my friends!
To horse, quick; we will rescue him, or perish.

Ler. Ardolf, pursue the eastern causeway you;
I with a chosen few will trace the path,
Which led me from the postern.

Ard. Wisely cautioned:——
Divided thus, we wage an easier war.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Within the Castle. Enter GREY *and* MORTON.

Grey. My noble Morton!——well hast thou repaid
The nicer hope which I repos'd in thee.
—Their unprovided rest outruns my wishes.

Mor. Fools! not to see through my hypocrisy!
That, in the borrow'd guise of honest friendship,
I studied but to lure them to my toils—
Conceal'd from upper light, it yields a safe
Retreat—through that they purpos'd their escape.

Grey. Within the secret womb of that same vault,
When all the castle's hush'd, their bleeding trunks
We will deposit.

Mor. Yes—we will be bloody.

Grey. Here is the weapon—Be firm, and prosper.

[Mor. *receives a dagger and goes out.*

——Thou too, unthinking fool, must this hour bleed—
Would it were over—they may chance to wake.—
Thou, Sleep! still child of sable-hooded night,
Befriend us! From thy dark Lethean cell
Up-conjure all thy store of drowsy charms:
Lock fast their lids, o'erpower each torpid sense,
That they awake not ere the deed be done—

[*Bell tolls.*

—The second watch: and like death's curfew, deep
And dismal verberates the solemn knell!

Enter a Knight.

Knt. A stranger, sir, who calls him Oswald, waits
Without the castle, and would speak with you.

Grey. Oswald!—He is our friend.

Knt. I have not learn'd
His errand; but, as it would seem, he comes
With news that much imports thy present hearing.

Grey. I'll speak with him anon.

Knt. I know not what
Their purpose; but even now, as on the tower
I stood, which high o'erlooks the eastern causeway,
Methought I heard the distant sound of horses,
As hither bent in full career.

Grey. Th' sound
Of horse!—Look out; call up our knights—away.
[*Exit* Knt.
—What can delay him?—Should my present hopes
Miscarry, I will bear the lady hence,
And make her hostage for my safety; nay,
Perchance, what I have some incentives to,
Supplant them both, the lover and the husband—
He comes!—

Re-enter MORTON.

Mor. Oh! that the earth would yawn and cover me!
Or that Heaven's quick-devouring fires had shrunk
And whither'd up this arm when it was rais'd—
Eyes! eyes! why clos'd ye not ere you beheld
The ghastly ruin?

Grey. Speak, direct——are they dispos'd?

Mor. Away!—thou hast destroy'd my peace forever—
Had you beheld him as he lay, struggling
In the cold gripe of death; his cheeks o'erspread
With livid pale; those eyes, that late shot forth
So radiant, now quite sunk; their burning lamps
Extinct; while from the deep-mouth'd wound,
As from a copious fountain, issued forth

Life's purple springs.—
I would have fled, but horror for a space
Suspended every power.
Grey. 'Tis well—
Hast thou then slain Lord Salisbury?
At thy own peril be it—Help!—He has slain
The innocent!
They're murder'd, foully murder'd by a slave. [*Exit.*
Mor. The earth has teem'd with prodigies—this sure
Out-monsters all!

Enter RAYMOND *hastily, with his Sword drawn.*

Ray. On what purpose art thou here?
Mor. Lord Raymond cannot be a stranger sure.
Ray. A dagger!—what hast thou done?
Mor. Did not my lord approve the deed?
Ray. What deed?
Mor. How this!—My lord,
I had your sanction ratified by Grey;
With promise of high recompence the hour
When Salisbury should expire.
Ray. Accurs'd be he that told thee so; and thou
That gav'st him credit!
Mor. This is strange!
Ray. Approve!
I did not; by the powers of truth I did not—
Remorseless villain!—Where, where shall I hide
Me? whither shall I fly?—O deed of horror!—
Thy blood, detested hireling, shall in part
Compensate.

Mor. Hold—He cannot sure dissemble—
Wish you, my lord, this deed were yet undone?
Ray. What would the monster?—Oh! could I recall
His life by killing twenty thousand slaves
Like thee, it were a comfort!
Mor. I believe
That you are innocent:—know then, my lord—
He lives—he sleeps; and sleeps secure of harm.
Ray. Take heed thou dost not trifle.
Mor. I will confess
Me true, and Heaven forgive my foul intent!
I undertook to slay this innocent:
Approach'd him as a friend—I saw his sufferings;
Saw his distracted wife: at length I curs'd,
And in my heart abjur'd the wicked purpose.
Ray. Had'st thou the goodness! Then, perhaps—
Mor. I thought
Haply that you yourself might soon relent.
—This instrument of purpos'd cruelty,
I took; and with a fair-devised tale
Of Salisbury's death, amus'd the guilty wretch
That would ensnare your quiet.
Ray. Is this honest?
Mor. Approach, my lord, approach, and let your eye
Be witness of my truth—In doing thus,
I thought I should be deem'd Lord Raymond's friend.
Ray. Thou wert the best of friends!—Retire thou now— [*Exit* Mor.
One way there yet remains to reconcile
This double war, and heal my tortur'd bosom.—

Thou, that so soundly sleep'st, unguarded thus
[*Going to the side of the stage.*
Against whatever ill that may approach thee,
Awake!——rouse from the bed of listless sleep,
And see who comes to greet thee.

Enter LORD SALISBURY.

Lord Sal. Do I dream?
Or am I in the regions of the unblest,
Beset with monsters?——Though thou art a fiend,
I will attempt thee.

Ray. Rush not on my weapon.——
I have sought thee on a cause which honour loves;
And would not have thee mar my soul's fair purpose.

Lord Sal. Inglorious! base! Oh, shame to manhood!—Dearly
Shalt thou atone the accumulated wrongs
That I do bleed withal.——Nor sea, nor earth,
Though thou should'st traverse her remotest climes,
Shall shelter thee from my determin'd fury.

Ray. Think not that I shall fly thee; or that I
Have sought thee now, but on such terms as even
May challenge thy applause. I come a foe
Indeed, but I do come a generous foe.

Lord Sal. A generous foe!——The brave indeed aspire
To generous acts——their every thought looks up,
And honour's dictates are their only function:
But thou!—what terms would'st thou propose? What act

Of that essential virtue, that may rase
The ignoble stains wherewith thou art polluted?

Ray. The ignoble, and the brave alike have err'd;
And he that re-ascends to virtue's height,
Does often snatch a wreath, which never bloom'd
On safer wisdom's brow.——First let me loose
Those ignominious bonds, which have indeed
My own dishonour'd—not the wearer's arm.

[*Takes off his chains.*

Lord Sal. Say, to what purpose tends this honest seeming?

Ray. That I have wrong'd thee, I confess——take this, [*Gives him a sword, and draws another.*
The only restitution I have left.—
I know thou never can'st forgive, nor I
Forget:—The sword then judge between.

Lord Sal. Indeed!——
Lives there so much of honour then within thee?
Spite of the mighty wrongs which thou hast done
Me, I do thank thee.

Ray. Now fortune mark her favourite!——

[Ray. *is disarmed.*

Then she is partial, and I must submit.

Lord Sal. Take up thy sword again; my fair revenge
Disdains too cheap a conquest.

Ray. 'Tis too much.
Oh generous!—generous even to cruelty!——
Some way I would repay thee—Oh, that I

[*Takes up his sword.*

Had never seen thy wife!——It may not be——

Then let me tear for ever from my breast
The guilty passion:—thus I thank thee—thus
[*Wounds himself.*
Atone the mischiefs, that——Oh!—— [*Falls.*

Lord Sal. This indeed
Atones for all. Thou much misguided youth!
What tempted thee to stray so wide from honour?

Ray. Ask, ask that villain; he will answer all——
That villain Grey, whose wicked arts seduc'd me——
Forgive——I die, I die:—a dreadful proof
What ills await the wretch, who gives his ear
To vicious counsels.

Lord Sal. Dreadful proof indeed!——
I do forgive thee, so forgive thee, Heaven!

Re-enter MORTON.

Now where's my wife? where is my friend Leroches?

Mor. My lord, by my assistance he has fled.
——I saw how vain your purpose to escape;
His single flight was unobserved.——Your friends,
In quest of whom he hasted, are arriv'd:
That trumpet speaks it. [*A trumpet heard.*

Lord Sal. It is, it is, Sir Ardolf!—See, he comes.

Enter ARDOLF *and* Knights.

Ard. My noble friend!——safe!—crown'd with conquest too!

Lord Sal. Saw you Leroches?

Ard. My lord,
He sought the castle by a private path——
I thought he had been here by this.

Lord Sal. 'Tis well.
But where's my wife? my son?—my soul is maim'd
Of half its joys till I've again embrac'd them.

Enter ELEANOR.

Ele. My lord, my lord!——the countess and Lord William——
Send, send and save them from destruction!
With horses that outstrip the winds, the villains
Have borne her from the castle!

Lord Sal. Ravish'd by villains!——Mount your horses, haste!——

Ard. Say, which way have they fled?

Ele. West of the castle:
Heaven grant their swiftness mock not your best speed!

Ard. Now, good my lord, if I might speak——

Lord Sal. Speak not
To me; but forth and scour the country!

Ard. Hark!
Methought I heard a voice——

Ele. And I methought.——
Perhaps Heaven has been kind!—perhaps 'tis she.

Lady Sal. [*Entering.*] Now, hush'd be ev'ry fear—
Where, where's my hero,
That I may once more hold him to my bosom?

Enter LADY SALISBURY *and* LORD WILLIAM, *conducted by* LEROCHES.

Lord Sal. 'Tis she! 'tis she!
My wife is in my arms again!—Speak, speak——
Oh, whence this precious, this unlook'd event?

Lady Sal. When the fell ruffian,
When Grey with impious hands had snatch'd us hence;
Then came my guardian angel—came your friend,
And rescued us from ruin.

Ler. Happy hour!
I took the path which brought me to their rescue!
The atrocious villain fell beneath this arm.

Lord Sal. My wife!
My son! my friend!—My God! my guardian God!

Ele. O joy, that they are here again!

Lord Sal. They're here! they're here!—my wife and son are here!——
Proclaim it, O ye sons of light!—spread wide
Your starry pinions, angels, spread them wide,
And trumpet loud throughout th' unmeasur'd tracts
Of highest Heaven, that virtue is made happy!

Lady Sal. Let the sun cease to shine, the planets cease,—
Drop every star from his ethereal height,
Ere I forget thee, source of every good!

Lord Sal. Friends, I am much beholden to you all.
My love! the gloom, that overspread our morn,
Is now disper'sd; our late mishaps
Recall'd shall be th' amusing narrative,
And story of our future evening, oft
Rehears'd. Our son too,—he shall hang upon
The sounds, and lift his little hands in praise
To Heaven: taught by his mother's bright example,
That, to be truly good, is to be bless'd.

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. DANCER.

THIS virgin author's such a blushing rogue——
What! no gay, lively, laughing epilogue?
'Madam,' says he, and look'd so wise! 'in Greece'—
(Greece—that's their cant) 'no jesting clos'd the piece.
'Play, epilogue, and all were grave and solemn'—
Then, sir, the town were fools that did not maul 'em.
No—let your heroine, in this laughing age,
Come thus (as Bayes says) souse upon the stage;
Then with a jaunty air—half smile, half grin,
Curtsey quite round the boxes, and begin.

A spark from court—no husband to detect him:
A pretty fellow too, and yet reject him!—
Now, ladies, let me die but it was silly——
You'll not approve such horrid prudery—will ye?—
I should have bless'd the occasion, and receiv'd him:
He should have kneel'd and vow'd, and I—believ'd him.
—Laugh'd, danc'd, and sported it till spouse came over,
Then kiss'd my dear—while Betty hid the lover.

But here again our Poet checks my flight:
'Nay, madam, you mistake the matter quite.

'My heroine liv'd in ancient, honest times;
'Cards were unknown, and gallantries were crimes.'—
Psha! what if females then were seldom rovers?
Husbands—(aye, there's the cause) were warm as lovers.
Their warlike days indeed were spent in killing;
But then, at night—no turtles were so billing.

Well—though he gives me no smart things to say;
I wish this begging face may save his play:
The thing may mend, and learn to please you better—
Do then—nay, pray you show him some good nature.